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Five Keys to Faerie:
Towards a Theory of Fairy Tale Film

By

Mike Perschon

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF ARTS

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 2008

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395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-46973-6
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-46973-6

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DATE: SEPTEMBER 5, 2008

Abstract

This study seeks to advance a conceptualization of the genre of fairy tale film as a tool for use in the broader context of both fairy tale and film scholarship. A number of primary film sources are employed to determine a thematic core comprised of five key elements which defines fairy tale films as a genre in its own right, as well as connects the fairy tale film with the larger tradition of folklore and fairy tales. The five key elements are identified as: a sense of wonder, sexuality and gender, the conflict of good and evil, the success of the meritorious individual, and finally, metamorphosis and transformation. Guillermo Del Toro's film Pan's Labyrinth serves as a case study which utilizes the five thematic elements in a harmonious fashion.

Acknowledgements:

First and foremost to my wife Jenica, whose continual support and love are the answer to everyone's question, "how do you do it all?"

Gunnar and Dacy, who are my reasons for striving to achieve the excellence this career path requires.

My parents, Lutz and Judy Perschon, for always believing in me, letting me drop T-ball to stay at home and read, and for encouraging that little boy in grade 4 to go ahead and apply to a writer's college. My thanks go to them as well as to Dan and Luella Reese for being a source of "scholarships and bursaries" before I started getting the real ones.

My supervisor, Irene Sywenky for all her hard work and invaluable advice, comments, and critiques, endless edits and swift kicks in the MLA, and for the class on Fairy Tales and Folklore which spawned the undergraduate paper which inspired this thesis.

Janey Kennedy for all her pep talks and behind-the-scenes miracles that always seemed to come in just the nick of time. To Hiroko Ono-Paul, Sheila Troppman, and Barb Heagle for all the administrative gymnastics which kept me in the program, and kept food on my family's table.

Willi Braun, for giving me the first straight answer about what I needed to do to get into the M.A. program, and for writing the reams of recommendation letters which got me through it.

To my colleagues and classmates, who continually helped me realize I could actually pull this off, for always affirming my ability, and for spurring me on over sushi, coffee, or beer. There are simply too many of you to list.

Thanks to the SSHRC organization for the scholarship which without, I am sure I would still be writing this in between work shifts.

For Jenica, Gunnar and Dacy

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Chapter 01: Introduction

The evil queen has been defeated. The young boy has grown into a man and is about to marry his true love, a beautiful young woman, who is enigmatically a star fallen from the heavens. Along his journey, the young man found his long lost mother, discovered that she is a princess, making him the last blood heir to the throne of a magical kingdom. His former self-absorbed amour and rival suitor for her affections are seated together among the wedding guests, glaring at the resplendent bride and groom with obvious envy. "They ruled for 80 years," the narrator's voice intones over the images, relating how, in their twilight years, the young man and his beloved star flew into the heavens, "where they still live, happily ever after" (Vaughn 2007). With those closing words, the credits roll and the audience rises to leave, knowing they have watched a fairy tale film.

The movie is Stardust, an adaptation of Neil Gaiman's novel of the same name, which, according to its DVD cover, is a "magical fairytale like no other," a categorization critics and audiences intuited without marketing cues. There are three princely brothers all vying for the throne, an evil witch who wishes to restore her youthful beauty (and must kill the beautiful young maiden to accomplish it), and magical metamorphoses galore. The "happily ever after" at the end feels more a knowing wink, nearly superfluous by the time the words are spoken. Given its bold optimism and primary color palette, the film provoked comparisons to The Princess Bride, which many would cite as *the* classic fairy tale film.

In his article "Towards a Theory of the Fairy Tale Film: The Case of Pinocchio," Jack Zipes, prominent scholar of fairy tales and folklore, makes the statement that "we know immediately that a particular film is a fairy tale when we see it" (1). But is this necessarily true? Audiences are quick to see the fairy tale in films such as Stardust and Princess Bride, bursting as they are with familiar fairy tale tropes and motifs. The quintessential producer of fairy tale film in North America is Disney's animation studio, whose monolithic monopoly of the popular perception of the fairy tale has garnered it the distinction whereby "fairy tale conventions evolved by the Disney Corporation are used to frame *other narratives*, thus transposing them into a fairy tale discourse" (Stepehns & McCallum 162; italics mine). Does this mean that if a film is adapted by Disney and includes elements of magic, such as the talking gargoyles of The Hunchback of Notre Dame, it changes from literary adaptation to fairy tale film? The situation is further frustrated by scholars like Zipes, who have taken a free-for-all approach to categorizing films as fairy tales, including X-Men (2000) as an example ("Moral Strains," 148-52), while others allow Pretty Woman as a retelling of "Cinderella" (Cooks, Orbe & Bruess) or Stephen King's Carrie as the horror genre's interpretation of either "Cinderella" (Short 14) or "Sleeping Beauty" (Alexander). It would seem the cinematic landscape of the perilous realm has become less familiar, less iconic. A web article at MSN.com has a list of "the best of those fairy tale movies for big kids" (Axmaker), which includes classic fairy tale adaptations such as Snow White: A Tale of Terror and Cocteau's Beauty and the Beast, along with other obvious candidates like The Princess Bride. Yet it also admits

more obscure inclusions to the fairy tale genre, namely Freeway and its sequel, which are ostensibly adaptations of "Little Red Riding Hood" and "Hansel and Gretel" respectively. How many people would classify a thriller involving a serial killer containing no magic, and lacking a happy ending, a fairy tale film? Is the film version of Shrek really a fairy tale film, or is it simply a long form lampoon of the Disney Corporation, a parody necessitating the inclusion of fairy tale trappings, as is the case in Hoodwinked!, which seems at times more concerned with spoofing action film xXx (2002) than the story of Little Red Riding Hood. What are the criteria for making such evaluations? Is the art of fairy tale film simply a matter of adapting an old tale and updating it? Or is there something more to what one should consider a fairy tale film? In the end, do we really *immediately* recognize a fairy tale film when we see it?

As a further example, let us consider the critically acclaimed early 1990s television drama Twin Peaks, whose heroine is a dead girl named Laura Palmer, "the Homecoming Queen with a hidden lust for sex" (Plummer 308). While the program was a pastiche of detective story and prime time soap opera, the otherworldly aspect of the program pointed to "one of the oldest narratives: the fairy tale. Along with the archetypal markers of the genre, they follow the narrative plot of Sleeping Beauty" (308). The crystal coffin has been replaced by a coroner's body bag, and the flaxen splinter of Basile's text is present as a clue in the form of a small paper letter. This item is removed, not by a suckling child but by Federal Agent Dale Cooper, the handsome prince's stand-in, who, though unsuccessful in awakening the sleeping

princess, is able to solve her murder, which, committed by her own father whose "burning…desire that drove him mad" (qtd. in Tatar 110), is also reminiscent of Perrault's "Donkeyskin." But do these narrative similarities indicate that Twin Peaks is a fairy tale film?

The seemingly obvious instance of the fairy tale film are films labeled as a fairy tale on the basis that they are direct adaptations of a specific tale such as "Cinderella." However, can any rags-to-riches story be considered as part of the Cinderella cycle of tales, and if so, does that make it a fairy tale by association? I would argue that the connection to source material alone is not enough to consider a film part of the fairy tale genre.

If one agrees with Zipes' claim that fairy tale film "has become the most popular cultural commodity in America" (Happily Ever After, 1), the question of what constitutes this genre has become an important one to the academic discourse on folk and fairy tales. Despite Stith Thompson's assertion that "cinema, especially the animated cartoon, is perhaps the most successful of all mediums for the presentation of the fairytale" (qtd. in Koven 177), feature films have been largely ignored by folklore and fairy tale studies (179) or heavily criticized, as is the case with Zipes' invective for Disney.[1] A discussion on the subject seems to be required. As Alec Worley notes, "[t]he few accounts of serious film criticism that discuss the fantasy

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[1] Jack Zipes' article "Towards a Theory of Fairy Tale Film: The Case of Pinocchio" promises in its title to rectify this situation, although taken as a whole, should have been called "Another Article About Why I Don't Like Disney," as it effectively does little, or nothing, to further our ability to conceptualize the genre of fairy tale film beyond adaptations of well-known fairy tales from the Grimm Brothers or Andersen.

genre almost invariably treat it like a whimsical offshoot of its genre cousins, or else seem unable to define it at all" (8).[2] Zipes admits that "[i]f we include live-action films such as Splash, The Princess Bride, Pretty Woman, Into the West, and the hundreds of sentimental films that rely on the fairy tale structure in which a magical transformation or miraculous event brings about a satisfying, happy ending, we could possibly argue that Hollywood itself as an industry and a trademark is inseparable from the fairy tale" (Happily Ever After, 1-2). Clearly a means of conceptualizing the constitution of a fairy tale film would be useful in the broader context of both fairy tale and film scholarship.

Soman Chainani notes that while postmodern revisionism reconceives the fairy tale storyline and how it is packaged or presented in a variety of forms, the majority of the "few critical studies of the postmodern fairy-tale genre gloss over these differences and isolate the portrayal of the heroine as the key to evaluating these revisions" (213). This approach focuses on the inversion of the "archetypal schema" rather than assessing these postmodern revisions on their other merits. I contend that fairy tale films must be taken both as an evolution of the fairy tale tradition, as well as an art-form in their own right. To this end, it is fair to criticize Disney insofar as it seems to have tainted the so-called purity of the "original" stories, if indeed there are any such originals to be had[3] (even the literary "original" works of Andersen and

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[2] As opposed to common use in film criticism, I will differentiate between the terms "fantasy" and "fairy-tale" in this study. The all-too-often conflated relationship between these designations will be discussed at the close of Chapter Two.

[3] Chainani notes that the images of the magic mirror, poison apples, dark-haired heroine and resuscitating kiss by the handsome prince have become ironically associated with the "definitive" tale of Snow White, given that "the Snow White story has perhaps the most historical variations and incarnations of any fairy tale" (214).

Wilde are derivative of earlier folktales and legends), but the works must be assessed with the criteria derived from the genre – what is common to fairy tale film, and what determines a film as belonging to that genre?

The goal of the present study is to outline a tentative theory of what constitutes fairy tale film as a distinct genre. Chainani cites Steven Swann Jones as having concluded that the current typologies of fairy tales are "unsuitable because they not only dilute the plethora of variations, but also ignore the significance of the fairy tale's *thematic core*" (215, italics mine). The present study is both an exercise in utilizing what I have determined to be the thematic core of fairy tale film via its connection to the oral folk tale and literary fairy tale, as well as an attempt to pick up where Zipes left off with his "Theory of Fairy Tale Film" by establishing that film in the Internet age is not a fixed media, but rather a new form of the oral tradition. Zipes will be utilized as a key theoretician throughout the study, most importantly for his contention that the medium of film has "silenced" the oral tradition of fairy tales. Utilizing Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," and examples of fan fiction from the Internet, I will argue that this is not the case. A full circle will be established, from oral folktale tradition, to literary fairy tale, to fairy tale film, and then again to an oral tradition, albeit a postmodern one, whose mercurial and hybrid nature requires a thematic core to navigate.

This thematic core will be explored thoroughly in an in-depth, chapter-by-chapter investigation of the five elements I propose as the keys to the constitution of the genre of fairy tale film. In advancing these elements, I draw in part on the Oxford

Companion to Fairy Tales, which posits three "assumptions" forming a "mythic matrix" (Stephens, "Myth" 331). The first of these three is gender and sexuality. The focus of this study is to go beyond the obvious realizations of this element in erotic/pornographic fairy tale adaptations, or the simplistic "fairy tale romance" of the Disney canon. To be precise, gender and sexuality in fairy tale film are concerned with the forming of identity in relation to "male and female behavior" (331) and the formation of the sexual and gendered subject. The second element is that "good will always conquer evil," which, despite its value-laden inferences, separates the fairy tale film from the horror film, which usually implies the continuity and persistence of evil; put in the parlance of the genre, this element states that in a fairy tale, the Big Bad Wolf *must* die. The third element requires that "the meritorious individual will rise in the world" (331). This element reflects the core conflict posited in the fairy tale film, namely that there will be difficulties to overcome, and that the fairy tale hero or heroine will rise to the challenge set before them to win out in the end. Both of these latter elements point to the happy ending fairy tales traditionally conclude with.

In addition to these three elements I propose two more which I argue to be endemic to the genre of fairy tale. The first is the presence of magic, inherent in the locality of a secondary world and/or in magical actions performed or witnessed by the characters. The second is hyperbolic physical metamorphoses[4] which can (not must)

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[4] I have chosen the term "metamorphosis" instead of "transformation" since, as The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales states, the term "transformation" is preferred when "some external agent of change is involved" (Clute & Langford 960), whereas "metamorphosis" implies a "*radical* change – from one kind of being to another [which] must have occurred through magic … [to reveal] the real nature of the subject." However, given that "[t]he active/passive distinction between *metamorphosing* and *being transformed* is too easily blurred to be a rigid dividing line" both terms will be employed interchangeably to refer to a radical "change of shape and nature" brought about by magic (641).

represent psychological changes. These elements are especially salient to the medium of film, which is ideally suited to delivering both physical metamorphosis and magic through the use of special effects, editing, and the creation of fantastic locations.

The five elements should be viewed as guidelines to understanding the genre of fairy tale. They are not meant to create hard and fast demarcations to include or exclude particular works from the corpus of fairy tale film "canon." They are not a linear map; they are not close kin to Joseph Campbell's heroic journey; there is not a specific order in which they must occur. They are not sacrosanct; there is nothing essential or transcendent about them. Having said this, the Oxford Companion utilizes the terms "metanarratives" and "exemplary models" to clarify what this "mythic matrix" designates (332). Accordingly, these are not transitory adhesions to the fairy tale genre. Revisionist fairy tales may attempt to subvert a particular *expression* of one of the elements, such as patriarchy as an aspect of gender and sexuality. This subversion, however, applies to the way a particular element is represented and interpreted and not the element itself. The consistent, "mythic" presence of these elements in the films conceptualized in this study as fairy tale films links the five elements back to the tradition of oral folk tales. This effectively brings the fairy tale tradition "full circle," since the subversive revisions of fairy tale film represent a "new orality" as will be discussed in chapter two.

The corpus of primary sources for the explication and analysis of these five elements will consist of a number of films representing the fairy tale genre. In each chapter, Guillermo del Toro's film Pan's Labyrinth will be examined as a model case

study which utilizes all five elements harmoniously. At its literal level, the film is the story of a young girl named Ofelia, who moves to a military outpost in rural Spain in 1944. The narrative is bifurcated, telling both Ofelia's story in the real world where Republican rebels hide in the hills seeking to overthrow the tyranny of Ofelia's wicked stepfather, as well as her quest to be restored as the princess of a fairy tale kingdom. As an original narrative and not an adaptation of a well-known fairy tale such as "Cinderella" or "Sleeping Beauty," it will serve as an example of how the five elements serve to conceptualize a fairy tale film. Given the challenge it presented film critics in categorizing it (Glenn Kenny of Premiere magazine called it "a mix of horror, fantasy, and history that convinces on all those levels and mixes them up with dizzying brio" (premiere.com)), it presents a similar challenge to this study in determining how these five elements separate the fairy tale film from that of fantasy and horror.[5] A selection of other fairy tale films will be examined in light of these five elements as well, acting respectively as either prototypical or problematic case studies of a particular element. Most notably, Valerie and Her Week of Wonders (1970), The Company of Wolves (1984), Legend (1985), Labyrinth (1986), Pretty Woman (1990), The City of Lost Children (1995), Ever After: A Cinderella Story (1998), Ginger Snaps (2000), Mirrormask (2005), Silent Hill (2006), Stardust (2007), and the television series Twin Peaks (1990) will be referenced several times.

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[5] While the problem of differentiation between fairy tale and fantasy film will be treated throughout the study, the distinction between fairy tale and horror film will be discussed at length in Chapter Five.

Since, as was already noted, there is a lack of scholarship in the area of fairy tale film,[6] the secondary sources employed in this study are largely concerned with folklore, literary fairy tales, fantasy genre, and film studies in general, with the exception of Alec Worley's Empires of the Imagination: A Critical Survey of Fantasy Cinema from Georges Méliès to The Lord of the Rings, which includes an entire chapter tracing the history of fairy tale films. Worley's survey proved indispensible in suggesting some points of departure. Max Lüthi's Once Upon a Time: On the Nature of Fairy Tales as well as selected writings from Jack Zipes' prolific scholarship on folklore and fairy tales will be referenced throughout the study. Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" will provide a crucial starting point for my argument of fairy tale film's new orality, while Internet fan fiction will play a significant role in demonstrating one form this new orality has taken. As will be discussed in the following chapter, the modern film audience is not a passive one; they are interacting with the fairy tale film, helping to shape and mold it, at the same time being shaped and molded by the film in turn, thus renewing the oral tradition. The spirit of this study is in keeping with that of Will H. Rockett's

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[6] There has been work on the subject of fairy tale film, but it is sparing, and none have undertaken the task of determining a thematic core of the genre of fairy tale film. There have been articles devoted to one particular film's relationship to a classic fairy tale, as in the case of "Stephen King's *Carrie*—A Universal Fairytale" (Alexander 1979), and "The Fairy Tale Theme in Popular Culture: A Semiotic Analysis of Pretty Woman" (Cooks, Orbe & Bruess 1993), which both compare their respective films to "Cinderella" or Laura Plummer's "I'm Not Laura Palmer" (1997) which compares Twin Peaks to "Sleeping Beauty." There have also been studies which deal with the inclusion of fairy tale tropes and motifs in horror film, such as Sue Short's Misfit Sisters (2006) and Walter Rankin's Grimm Pictures (2007). Fairy tale films are given brief treatment in works dealing with a fairy tale figure's entire literary tradition, as is the case in Catherine Orenstein's Little Red Riding Hood Uncloaked (2002). Finally, Jack Zipes has written on the subject of fairy tale film, but focuses his attention largely on denouncing Disney or dismissing popular fairy tale film as a negative offspring of the culture industry in North America (Happily Ever After).

introduction to Devouring Whirlwind: Terror and Transcendence in the Cinema of Cruelty, an appropriate and appropriated caveat to conclude this introduction:

> I would hazard that one's overall critical viewpoint should admit into consideration the possible contributions to our understanding of film genres which may be made by examining both semantics and syntax, both social and personal ideology, both the conscious and the unconscious, both the collective and the personal forms of these states of consciousness, and the art, the artist, and the audience. Without such openness, one cannot do justice to the genre that one seeks to explore. (xv-xvi)

So with hearts open to all the possibilities, let us enter the darkened theater, like Lucy stepping through the wardrobe, like Alice tumbling down the rabbit hole, like Ofelia descending the stairs into the Faun's labyrinth: liminal portals all. The doorway to the darkened theater is no lesser a conduit to secondary worlds than these fairy tale doorways. The door to the movie theater is a threshold to a thousand worlds, an entrance to Borges's Garden of Forking Paths. Through this doorway we step to take our seat with other travelers, and as the first images flicker across the screen, we step out of the familiar world we know, and into the perilous realm of Faerie.

Chapter 02: Theoretical Thoughts

A Postmodern Oral Tradition

In his introduction to Spells of Enchantment, Jack Zipes laments the loss of the oral tradition of fairy tales, and lays the blame for this loss at the foot of fairy tale cinema, particularly that of the Disney canon. In general, he states that "the fairy-tale film silenced the personal and communal voice of the oral magic tales and obfuscated the personal voice of literary fairy-tale narratives" (6). He has repeatedly criticized Disney's versions of fairy tales, making the "assumption…that since filmmaking is a highly technical occupation, one [that] results in a fixed text, the 'folk' don't have a chance to influence it" (Jackson 388). Yet in "Breaking the Disney Spell," Zipes ironically comments that "worship of the fairy tale as holy scripture is a petrification of the fairy tale" (qtd. in Tatar 337). The petrification Zipes speaks of might be arguable in regards to the eclipsing Disney fairy tale canon, which "replaces the originally orally circulated text and thereby created a sense of canonicity" (Koven 178), but Zipes' own zeal to return the fairy tale to its oral roots denies modern modes of orality, and belies a transcendent essentialism of perceived notions about the proper mode by which the fairy tale ought to be transmitted, effectively treating the tales like holy scripture.

In his article "Once There Was a Time," Zipes openly employs the term "aura" in reference to Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," stating that there was once a time when the aura of fairy tales "illuminated the possible fulfillment of utopian longings and wishes" (6). This "once

upon a time" is an academic fairy tale land; Zipes creates a polemic between authentic, genuine folk tales / fairy tales (transmitted orally), and less worthy, inauthentic versions, which include almost all the contemporary appropriations of the fairy tale, especially those Zipes attributes to "the culture industry in the Western world," (3).

Benjamin's essay provides us with a bridge from Zipe's nostalgic lament for the oral tradition of fairy tales to the interactive participation of the modern viewer. Zipes' passing reference to Benjamin's definition of the aura of art is an interesting one, given Zipes' Marxist perspective, and the fact that Benjamin was not lamenting the loss of said aura, but instead celebrating the emancipation of "the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual" (224). Benjamin comments on how the "[m]echanical reproduction of art *changes the reaction* of the masses toward art… characterized by the direct, intimate fusion of visual and emotional enjoyment" (emphasis mine), a communal viewing experience which brings about a democratization of art, achieved through the simultaneous critical and receptive attitudes a film promotes. Unlike other art forms, film is largely enjoyed in the presence of other filmgoers. Benjamin compares the experience of viewing a film to the recitation of the epic poem, itself a product of oral tradition (234-35). In Benjamin's day, this progressive reaction would have been limited to discussion amongst friends regarding a shared viewing of a film, and tempered by newspaper reviews of the same. In a contemporary context, even if the viewers' first experience of a film is solitary, their subsequent experiences of the film are likely to have a

communal aspect; they will read other's critical reviews in the paper or online, discuss the film in their social network, post their own review or rating of it on internet movie-review sites such as Flickster.

The deluge of amateur film critics on the Internet adds a level of participation to the experience of movie-going which echoes the "subversive features" of the oral tradition where "social behavior [cannot] be totally dictated, prescribed and controlled" (Zipes qtd. in Tatar 1999, 336). The interactive virtual space of the Internet performs similar functions of the oral tradition, realizing Benjamin's prediction that the line between author and receiving public would become blurred in an age of easily reproducible art:

> At any moment the reader is ready to turn into a writer. As expert, which he had to become willy-nilly in an extremely specialized work process, even if only in some minor respect, the reader gains access to authorship…Literary license is now founded on polytechnic rather than specialized training and thus becomes common property. (232)

As another Benjamin states in character as Holden McNeil in Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back, "[t]he internet is a communications tool, used the world over where people can come together to bitch about movies" (2001). This crass description of the internet succinctly sums up how accurate Walter Benjamin's prediction of the eradication of the demarcation between author and reader and by extension filmmaker and filmgoer has become. Audiences are much like Jeff Albertson, the Simpson's "Comic Book Guy," whose catchphrase "Rest assured, I was on the internet within

minutes, registering my disgust throughout the world" encapsulates the activity of viewers who can rate or review the film on their personal webpage, blog, film site, or on networking applications such as MySpace or Facebook. They chat about it using instant messaging software, or in an online chat room devoted to analysis and criticism of film. Fan culture internet chat rooms are "playrooms" wherein narraforms,[7] "narrative[s] based on mass media dramatic and fictional performances" (Grider 1976: 345), are constantly being constructed, so that film gains an aspect of the oral tradition while simultaneously retaining a link to the literary one. Modern audience members are considered active contributors to the creation of popular culture, and therefore "much more comparable with folk 'audiences'" (Koven 188).

One of the best examples of how narraforms engage this interactive participation with a fixed canon of media releases is George Lucas' Star Wars series, which has been said to have "single-handedly created the film-merchandising business" (Baxter 7). This billion dollar merchandising enterprise not only made George Lucas an incredibly wealthy man, but provided the means via sales of millions of action figures for a pre-microchip generation to create their own fictions based in the ontology of that galaxy "far, far away." Anecdotally, I personally recall playground chatter in the late 70s and early 80s centering around theories explaining Darth Vader's horrible disfiguration or whether or not he was really Luke

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[7] Sylvia Grider observed that media characters have been appropriated by their child audiences, who "frequently reiterate plot narratives from their favorite television shows and movies" fashioning them into "highly complex and original storytellings" which she called "media narraforms" (Koven 178). Grider deals specifically with the horror genre, and is primarily interested in retellings which use traditional oral storytelling techniques (Grider 1976: 345, but "narraform" is a useful appellation for the phenomenon of unofficial appropriation of a master media narrative by audiences).

Skywalker's father as much, if not more than, urban myths, knock-knock jokes and other oral playground traditions. These discussions were often held while playing with Star Wars toys to enact the imagined scenarios. The children who amused themselves with these toys became the adults who inherited the universe Lucas built, writing the extracanonical books and graphic novels, designing the video games, and working on the prequel trilogy[8]. Ewan McGregor, who starred as a young Obi-Wan Kenobi in the prequel films, stated that "[he's] been waiting nearly twenty years to have [his] own light saber. Nothing's cooler than being a Jedi Knight" (filmspot.com). While the Star Wars canon of films is unarguably Lucas' brainchild, the "galaxy far, far away" they take place in has been co-opted by the fans. Amateur short films became so proliferate that Lucas finally organized an annual festival to showcase them, while hundreds of pieces of written Star Wars fan fiction are available online. Add to this the culture of tabletop roleplaying games, and Star Wars Galaxies, a Massive Multiplayer Online Roleplaying game[9] which boasts, "where the movies left off, your adventure begins" (starwarsgalaxies.station.sony.com).

One result of the Star Wars merchandising inundation and the fan and audience narraforms it birthed was the development of an "irreverent reverence" towards the Star Wars canon. By the time the prequel trilogy was released, many Star Wars fans had speculated on the events which lead to the original trilogy for over 20

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[8] One fan, Ryan Wieber worked at LucasArts for two years after gaining critical acclaim for a humorous fan film which featured a lightsaber duel.

[9] Massive Multiplayer Online Roleplaying games are online role-playing games wherein players from all over the world play simultaneously within a persistent virtual world which is run continuously on client-server system architecture.

years, which might explain the lukewarm reception the prequel trilogy received from adult fans. The authorized, canonical story did not meet the expectation of the speculative oral narraforms: To use Zipes' language, the treatment of the story as a sacred text did *not* result in petrification, but appropriation, creation, and ultimately rejection of subsequent "canonical sacred texts."

As in the case of Star Wars, many films have had their narratives expanded upon through the medium of fan-fiction, narratives based upon popular films and television shows, written by fans of the original work. Undeterred by Disney's monolithic representation of the fairy tale, FanFiction.net boasts 1,053 stories in its Disney FanFiction archive, which diverge from their sources in surprising ways.

Among the short stories and flash fiction based on Disney's canon at Fanfiction.net is a piece called "Royal Guardian: Princess of Heart" (leotabelle13). "Royal Guardian" plays with the iconic figures of three of the most popular Disney heroines, all of whom have died defending the magical kingdom of Fantasia against "a great evil," but have poured their collective "powers" into a "dream diamond", whose power only "the three heirs to the princesses" will be able to "harness and awaken." In the ensuing narrative, modern adolescent girls, a punk, an overachiever, and a "daddy's girl" prove to be the three heirs. This sort of revisionism is reminiscent of the contemporary fairy tales by modern fantasy writers aimed at the young adult market. Its resemblance to the original Disney films is demonstrated only through the appropriation of names and certain iconic costume pieces or elements; the heir to Ariel from Disney's The Little Mermaid is a member of the school swim team,

who chooses a "seagrean [sp] dress lined with torn fishnet at the hem" to wear to the school dance. The writer comments that the story takes place in "an L.A. that intermingles with the Disney world" (leotabelle13).

Hybridity and the Fluidity of the Genre

As evidenced by the rejection of the Star Wars film prequels, modern audiences, in an ostensibly postmodern mindset, reject the concept of an overarching metanarrative. So even the fixed medium of film finds fluidity in the oral milieu where opinion holds the power to alter the meaning of each retelling, finding a place for "disparate interrogations of the metanarratives of culture" (Stephens & McCallum 201) wherein we understand that "the Disney text would be considered but one text among countless other variants" (Koven 177), effectively making the audience "the new folklorists, the new Grimms, charged with again retelling an old tale in new clothes" (Gruner 153).

As has been shown, even the Disney canon can be subverted by the very success Zipes disapproves of. Besides, as Joan Gould aptly reminds us, "[t]here's no point in complaining that the Disney films pervert the "real" stories like "Snow White,"... since no such thing as an original or authentic version of an old fairy tale exists" (23).[10]

Zipes readily admits this in his own fashion, saying that "the fairy tale as institution cannot be defined one-dimensionally," that is to say, defined by Disney or any other mass media approach more concerned with happy endings than subversive potentials

[10] Gould later quotes a Greek proverb: "The fairy tale has no landlord" (25).

(Spells of Enchantment xxix). Nevertheless, if the "readers, viewers and writers of fairy tales constitute its broadest meaning" (xxix), then mass media's democratization of art combined with the large scale interactive forum of the internet and the postmodern disregard for metanarrative could conceivably bring about a vastly broad and yet still distinct understanding of what constitutes fairy tale film. As David Riesman observed, "people do not attend to the media as isolated atoms, but as members of groups which select among the media and interpret their messages" (qtd. in Koven 187).

Cristina Bacchilega sees the supposed ideological simplicity of fairy tales as a "trap for the complacent reader," implying that fairy tales are, as Shrek referred to himself, "like onions…Onions have layers" (2001). The supposed ideological simplicity is distinguished by the fairy tale's ability "to make everything so clear that it works magic, no questions asked" (qtd. in Chainani 212). The postmodern fairy tale, while retaining a "naturalized artifice" of simplicity, relentlessly questions, deconstructs, and poses alternatives to its own ontology (212). Aside from short film adaptations of fairy tales, the fairy tale as film is subjected to such relentless questioning, deconstruction and scrutiny as soon as the writers sit to determine the method by which tales requiring only minutes to read out loud will be amplified into feature length productions. The very act of bringing a fairy tale to the screen is an interpretive enterprise, unwrapping layers beneath the artifice to expose them through visual storytelling. Given the multifaceted way in which fairy tales have been

interpreted over the years, the potential number of possible filmic interpretations seems endless.

It is precisely because of this highly mercurial, interpretive, postmodern landscape that this study will endeavor to posit a thematic core of the constitution of fairy tale film within academic genre studies. Jonathan Smith observed that the problem for religious studies was not that "religion cannot be defined, but that it can be defined, with greater or lesser success, more than fifty ways" (193). The same applies to literary studies, specifically stucturalist analyses of folklore, where Aarne and Thompson's classification system or Propp's *Dramatis Personae* could allow nearly any narrative to be a folktale/fairytale. Further confounding the issue is the ambiguous overlap between fantasy and fairy tale, wherein "the concepts overlap and are used interchangeably" (Nikolejeva 138). While it would be presumptuous to state that the following will form a definitive classification of fairy tale film, "some basic generic distinction is desirable for theoretical consideration" (138). Tolkien's playful estimation of his own investigation of the literary fairy tale genre in his essay "On Fairy Stories" sums up what our approach will be nicely: "Faërie cannot be caught in a net of words; for it is one of its qualities to be indescribable, though not imperceptible. It has many ingredients, but analysis will not necessarily discover the secret of the whole. Yet I hope that what I have later to say…will give some glimpses of my own imperfect vision of it" (17). We will risk answering the questions "that one who is to speak about fairy-stories must expect to answer" and brave "whatever the folk of Faërie may think of [our] impertinence" (11).

Some sort of definition or distinction will be necessary to this impertinence. While some would prefer to let fairy tales retain an aspect of sacred scripture, it must be said that where there is transcendence, there is no discussion. In an age where the major religious scriptures are subjected to rigorous literary criticism, fairy tales are hardly exempt, whatever Tolkien or Zipes might say about the ephemeral nature of such a task. Barry Keith Grant, in his primer on film genre, discusses the necessity of generic distinction: "Categories such as narrative, documentary and abstract or experimental, while they do cover the range of possible types of filmmaking, are too broad to be very useful for genre criticism"; Grant makes the noteworthy caveat that these generic categories, however defined, "must be useful" (23).

Grant cites Stuart Kaminsky and Tom Leitch as acknowledging the difficulty of defining genres, such as crime films, since a number of sub-genres may be included within a broad generic category. He introduces the idea of "ironic hybridization" which "seeks to combine elements from previously pure or discrete genres," with some critics such as Janet Staiger and Steve Neale concluding that "nearly all Hollywood films were hybrids insofar as they tended to combine one type of a generic plot…with others" (23). This is a useful concept for our discussion, since it is not the intention of this work to make an inflexible structuralist model for categorizing fairy tale film. The goal is not to place the genre into a box (or genie in a bottle), but rather to encourage an understanding of fairy tale film within the larger literary tradition it owes its genesis to, and to create a matrix by which productive discussion of the subject may be entered into.

Further, the term "hybrid"[11] is an apt descriptor for both literary and cinematic contemporary fairy tale narratives. Many contemporary films, which are classified as, or based upon, fairy tales exhibit this hybridity. This is especially true of films using live action instead of animation. Jaromil Jireš' Valerie and Her Week of Wonders (1970), which Lawrence P. Raffel of Monstersatplay.com describes as "combining the elements of a grotesque fairy tale, horror flick and sensual romp" (mostersatplay.com), blends vampire imagery, blatantly referencing Max Shreck's portrayal of Count Orlock in Murnau's Nosferatu, with softcore erotica, all the while still retaining a sense of wonder and surreality, which, Tanya Krzywinska states, lends it a resemblance to "East German fairytale films" (2003). The Princess Bride is a combination of comedy, adventure, and romance; Pan's Labyrinth blends fantasy, horror, war and drama; Twin Peaks draws from television soap opera, detective mysteries, conspiracy theories, slasher films and science fiction. Beyond these hybrid pastiches, one must consider the aforementioned Freeway, which is a thriller involving a serial killer. Pretty Woman is a romantic comedy.

The difficulty of classifying a fairy tale film as such can be seen in the marketing of The Company of Wolves; director Neil Jordan states on the DVD commentary that Cannon films erroneously marketed it primarily as a horror film. This can be seen clearly from the film's promotional poster, which features the

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[11] I have chosen the term hybridity because of its positive connotation, hoping to reverse what U.C. Knoepflmacher rightly recognizes as a derision among academic work in literary fairy tales, towards the "impurity of this eclectic subgenre." Knoepflmacher describes this impurity as "a sophisticated awareness of its own generic fluidity [which] ought to be prized for its sturdiness, adaptability, and capacity to spawn a great variety of offspring" (15). It has been one of the goals of this project to recognize how this impurity/hybridity has spawned so many offspring, and to attempt to classify and evaluate these celluloid children of the fairy tale tradition.

alarming lycanthropic metamorphosis of supporting actor Micha Bergese into a wolf, the lupine snout of the beast forcing its way from Bergese's impossibly augmented oral cavity, while the film's protagonist Rosaleen, as played by Sarah Patterson, is relegated to the background. The intention of the poster is clear: to draw in audiences attracted to horror films by showcasing a disturbing physical special effect, commonly associated with horror films of the 1980s featuring werewolves, such as the highly successful American Werewolf in London (1981) and The Howling (1981).

The purposes of a thematic core for fairy tale films would be to understand them as a genre in their own right, followed by the clarification of ambiguity over what constitutes the films belonging to the genre.

Beyond Adaptations

The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales includes a four-fold taxonomy in its entry on "Film and Fairy Tales." The first is a direct adaptation of a "particular version of a fairy tale with minimal addition or change" (McCallum & Stephens 161). This assumes that "there is something essential about the 'original' story which can be reproduced" (162). Since the majority of fairy tale film revises their primary source, if for no other reason than the necessity of augmenting a much shorter source text, [12] we will consider this category to be effectively subsumed into the second type, which

[12] The Oxford Companion notes that "[t]he expansion of a story to run for an hour or more may entail enhanced characterization, introduction of subplots or additional minor characters, and the development of strategies for maintaining audience engagement" (160).

"reproduces the story, but in doing so either reinterprets or deconstructs the source material" (162). In both cases, the titles of these films immediately signal that they are part of the fairy tale film discourse, since they bear the names and, aside from the usual critique of Disney's redefinition of meaning (which I have already suggested is another form of essentialism), bear strong resemblance to their sources.

However, the Oxford Companion fails to recognize many of the films already listed in this project, arguably based upon fairy tale sources, which belong primarily to other genres, such as the aforementioned Pretty Woman, as a variation of the Cinderella tale. This comparison may be supportable based solely upon reliance on the Cinderella tradition, but then ostensibly by extension, so is every other rags-to-riches story. Resemblance to a particular tale is not one of the criteria for evaluating a film as part of the fairy tale genre. Both the Cohen Brothers' depression era dark comedy O Brother Where Art Thou? and Anthony Minghella's film version of Charles Frazier's civil war historical novel Cold Mountain share key plot points with Homer's The Odyssey.[13] Yet neither would fall within the generic tradition of Heroic Epic, less so the Greek tradition. O Brother's slapstick comedic elements and bluegrass soundtrack are far removed from the "glorious deeds of heroes" (Hainsworth 24), and while Cold Mountain displays acts of heroism, the story lacks the key "supernatural accompaniment" (27) of the Greek heroic tradition. Very simply, a customer browsing in a video store would find it odd if the suggestion were

[13] O Brother Where Art Thou? claims in its title credits to be based upon Homer's epic, while Cold Mountain's affiliation with the Odyssey has been noted Elizabeth Vandiver's article "From Noman to Inman: The "Odyssey" in Charles Frazier's "Cold Mountain"" (2004).

made, "If you enjoyed Troy, then you should check out Cold Mountain and O Brother Where Art Thou."

In the same fashion, one cannot include films within the fairy tale genre based solely upon similarity to known fairy tale narratives. If I exclude Ever After from being a fairy tale film on the basis that it lacks wonder, but include Pretty Woman despite its apparent lack of wonder (because of Pretty Woman's more exaggerated metamorphosis from prostitute to princess), it would be too easy and obfuscating to argue that they are both Cinderella stories. To claim that Freeway is a fairy tale film is akin to saying Robocop should be considered a piece of Christian art, given the death and rebirth of its main character, and director Verhoeven's claim that "[t]he whole story…is a Christ metaphor. Murphy's killing is a crucifixion" (ghosts.org). Freeway could be classified as a thriller or dark comedy, but it is most definitely *not* a fairy tale film by the criteria outlined in this project; the presence of the animated opening title sequence serves only to alert less savvy viewers that Reese Witherspoon is playing a postmodern Little Red Riding Hood, and that Kiefer Sutherland is the Big Bad Wolf as serial killer. They are *characters* from a story which has been included in the fairy tale canon, placed into a modern serial-killer thriller. They are allomotifs of the Red Riding Hood tradition, but *not* of the fairy tale tradition. Not all fairy tales include a Little Red Riding Hood, a Grandmother, or a Big Bad Wolf. The earliest versions of the Red Riding Hood tradition cannot even be said to be fairy tales per se, but belong rather to the folktale tradition. So while Freeway is unarguably an adaptation of Little Red Riding Hood, it is not a fairy tale film *de facto*. In contrast,

The Company of Wolves is both overtly descended from the Red Riding Hood tales, as well as a strong example of a fairy tale film.

Accordingly, this project will focus on addressing the first two types of direct adaptations only occasionally as is necessary, focusing largely instead on the third type of fairy tale film identified by the Oxford Companion. This third category "treats its pre-text(s) as raw material for an original work, and may combine various versions of a tale or several tales, or *generate a new work* in the genre" (McCallum & Stephens 162, italics mine). It is for this reason (among others) that I have chosen Guillermo Del Toro's Pan's Labyrinth as the case study for this project. As a laudable member of this third category, it lacks a direct connection to any one tale tradition. It is not an adaptation of any of the famous fairy tales; it does not mimic Disney, nor rely directly upon the Brothers Grimm or Perrault. Director Guillermo Del Toro has steeped himself in the fairy tale tradition, drawing richly upon the oral and literary traditions, emerging with a narrative which seems very familiar, yet is something altogether new as well. There is a sense of verisimilitude to the intertextual fairy tale within the film, so much so that viewers of the film search the Internet for the primary source of the film, which does not exist. I am aware of this trend because it's a popular keyword entered into search engines which leads people to my blog where I have posted on Pan's Labyrinth (gotthammer.blogspot.com).

The lack of a clear tie to any particular fairy tale motif allows for a better understanding of the thematic core which constitutes a fairy tale film. Like Valerie and Her Week of Wonders or The City of Lost Children, Pan's Labyrinth is a fairy

tale film not because it is an adaptation of a known literary fairy tale, but because it contains the five elements and deals with them in depth. In this way, it will be easier to observe how each of the five elements works without the confusion of "canonical" considerations entering the argument. Pan's Labyrinth affords us the room to explore the fairy tale film without the weight of a narrative tradition for a beloved particular tale.

From Oral Folk Tale to Contemporary Fairy Tale Film: The Five Core Elements

It should be noted that brief references to the contemporary fairy tale revival in print literature will be made throughout the project, as it difficult to reference one without inclusion of the other. Indeed, there appears to be an inspirational interplay between contemporary literary fairy tales and fairy tale films. In his article "Once Upon a Time in the Future: The Relevance of Fairy Tales" Jack Zipes has done an admirable job of cataloging many "texts of different kinds" representing this contemporary fairy tale revival, which provide the means by which "the fairy tale is transmitted as cultural representation and forms a vital part of different cultural discourses" (101), in which he includes both films, books, and websites.[14] A handful of these additional types of contemporary fairy tale texts will be referenced throughout the project to serve as auxiliary benchmarks by which to further examine the five elements of fairy tale film. After all, they are part of the cultural discourse which reciprocally shapes the interpretive exercise which results in fairy tale films, from works such as Shrek,

[14] Zipes notes: "If I were to include the large number of advertisements, cartoons, films, videotapes, radio programs, toys, merchandise, and wearing apparel that make use of fairy tales, it would appear that we were living in a fairy tale universe" ("Once Upon A Time in the Future" 105).

The Princess Bride and Ella Enchanted which have all been made into films, to the works of Francesca Lia Block and Holly Black, which seem to be informed by a gritty film aesthetic more akin to the hip vampire film Lost Boys than any Disney animation. One can see the mark of Jon Scieszka's revisionist approach in The Truth About the Three Little Pigs and Roald Dahl's hilarious poem "Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf" in films such as Hoodwinked!, where the wolf is the prime suspect, but claims he is innocent, Red Riding Hood is a feisty teenager, and Granny is a thrill-seeking extreme sports junkie. And the sensually leonine appearance of Ron Perlman in the television series Beauty and the Beast, and his romantic and ultimately sexual relationship with Linda Hamilton's Catherine seems to owe a good deal to Angela Carter's "The Tiger's Bride."

It seems prudent at this point to include a brief discussion of the difference between fantasy and fairy tale, since most of the titles in this contemporary revival are marketed under the fantasy banner. This owes more to the extreme popularity of recent fantasy film franchises Lord of the Rings and Harry Potter than it does to any careful assessment of what constitutes a work of fantasy. Nevertheless, many of the films discussed in this study, Pan's Labyrinth included, have been categorized as "fantasy films." The discussion concerning what constitutes fantasy as a genre has not produced a simple answer, which complicates differentiating fantasy from other genres that share the elements of magic, otherworlds, and heroic narratives. In the introduction to Magill's Guide to Science Fiction & Fantasy Literature, the history of "modern fantasy theory" is traced from Tolkien's "On Fairy-Stories" in 1938 to

Roger Schlobin's The Aesthetics of Fantasy Literature and Art in 1982, concluding that "[d]espite its growing legitimacy, the study of fantasy is far from a settled matter, still very much fragmented by the various communities that have given rise to it, and still uncertain in its critical vocabulary" (Sobczak xxv).

The difficulty lies in the broad application of the term "fantasy," having been utilized to describe narratives in which events occur "that the reader believes to be [i]mpossible" (Wolfe 38). This is far too broad a definition to be of use, since it could include works of magical realism, science fiction, and horror as well as fairy tale. The statement that "fantasy is *inherently* best described and defined through prescriptive and exploratory example" (Clute, "Fantasy" 337) seems the best way to approach explanations of the difference between fantasy and fairy tale, but is beyond the scope of this paper to undertake such an exploration. It is understood that "fantasy's specific location in the spectrum of the fantastic is a matter of constant critical speculation" (337). As to the relationship or demarcation between fairy tale and fantasy, I would argue that they have been historically, both parent and child to each other. Mike Ashley has traced the progression of the literary fairy tale tradition to the writing of J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit and Lord of the Rings, seminal works in the fantasy genre ("Fairytale" 331-33). So the literary fairy tale can be seen as precursor to the genre of modern fantasy. However the "recent revival" (Ashley "Windling" 1022) of the fairy tale through the efforts of individuals such as Terri Windling, Ellen Datlow and the host of authors they employed to write revisionist fairytales has taken place under the wing of the genre of fantasy. The majority of writers who undertake

revisionist fairytales are writers of fantasy: Charles De Lint, Neil Gaiman, Orson Scott Card, and Holly Black, to name a few. This further blurs the already tenuous demarcation line between the two genres.

I am in agreement with Maria Nikolajeva when she states that "[a]lthough drawing clear-cut borders between myth, folktale, fairy tale, literary fairy tale, high or heroic fantasy, science fantasy, and so on, is impossible and not always necessary, some basic generic distinction is desirable for theoretical consideration" (138). Nikolajeva suggests three "ways of distinguishing" between fairy tales and fantasy: ontological, structural, and epistemological. Both her structural and epistemological distinctions find agreement within this project. Her structural distinction shares concepts discussed in Chapter Five, while her epistemological distinction affirms the attitude towards magic explored in Chapter Three. However, her conclusions regarding the ontological distinctions are overly simplistic, which will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

A few final notes on terms: I have chosen to forego the obvious abbreviation of Fairy Tale Film to an acronym such as FTF, simply because I find such approaches sterile and counterproductive to my own, and I assume, many other's reading. This choice is also based on the fairy tale's roots in oral and literary traditions to which such overly efficient approaches seems anachronistic. Likewise, throughout the paper I will refer to the fictional ontology presented in fairy tale films with the shorthand Faerie or Perilous Realm from time to time, borrowing from Tolkien's "On Fairy

Stories," with the hope that this will help immerse the reader in the *mise-en-scène* of the fairy tale film.

Chapter 03: A Sense of Wonder: Fairy Tale Landscapes and Ontological Effects Without Hesitation

In a scene from The City of Lost Children (1995), the marvelous is realized onscreen through a sequence of ridiculously serendipitous cause and effect chains of effect. Miette the heroine is being strangled by her protector, a strongman named One, whose mind is under outside malevolent control (through the device of a serum injected into his skin by a trained mite). As Miette struggles, a tear falls from her cheek. As she thrashes her head from side to side, the tear is launched into the air. This tear falls onto a spider's web, producing a light chiming noise which awakens a bird in a cage, who begins chirping loudly, which starts a dog barking, awakening a homeless drunk who throws a bottle to silence the dog. The bottle misses the dog, nearly striking a seagull instead. The seagull takes flight, defecating in fear. The guano strikes the windshield of a passing car, which crashes into a fire hydrant. The resulting flood sends a group of rats sailing into a local whorehouse; naked girls flee in terror, distracting a man working on a power line. All power in the town goes out, including the lighthouse, sending a ship off course to collide with the dock where One is strangling Miette. The dock collapses, and the shock of the water brings One to his senses in time to rescue Miette from drowning.

Were this a scene in a film with a *mise-en-scène* of stark realism, the audience's suspension of disbelief would have been shattered. A series of visual cues have informed the audience that this is not a film seeking to mimic the everyday, primary world. The opening scene is a dream; the waking world the dream cuts to is a

Steampunk-inspired laboratory filled with clones, a midget, a screaming man with a bizarre apparatus on his head, and a brain floating in an aquarium who speaks through an amplification system. Clearly, the audience must conclude that the film they are about to see is not dealing with anything resembling "stark reality." A sense of wonder has been offered, and the audience now has a choice: to accept the magic presented in the film as real within the onscreen ontological framework, or reject it outright.

The inclusion of a sense of wonder in this study seems basic, if understood as "[a]ll manner of weird phenomena" (Worley 14), another way of saying magic. A discussion of magic as an element of fairy tale film may even seem superfluous, given that it is the first thing people popularly attribute to the genre of the fairy tale. However, many of the elements described in this study could be included in a wide range of genres. Horror and fantasy both include weird phenomena, but are not necessarily fairy tale narratives. Furthermore, the inclusion of magic or the marvelous in fairy tale film has a particular execution which sets it apart from horror or the fantastic. This same proviso Worley applies to fairy tale film, wherein "for the duration [of the film], magic must be accepted as real…the audience must temporarily believe…that princes *can* turn into doves, wizards *can* command magic and faeries *do* exist" (10). In Jaromil Jires' Valerie and Her Week of Wonders, the heroine is given a pearl and told simply that it will save her. When she is sexually assaulted by a licentious priest, she places the pearl in her mouth without hesitation; when the priest attempts to kiss her, he backs away, asking "What have you done?"

and leaves her alone.[15] No satisfactorily rational explanation is given for such activity; our proviso is as Tolkien's, who said that "if there is any satire presented in the tale, one thing must not be made fun of, the magic itself. That must in that story be taken seriously, neither laughed at nor explained away" (17-18). Maria Nikolajeva states that the "hero of a fairy tale does not experience wonder when confronted with magical events or beings; they are taken for a granted" (154). In P.J. Hogan's recent remake of Peter Pan, John Darling replies to his sister Wendy's claim that Peter can fly by telling Peter, "You offend reason sir." Peter's answer is simply to float up into the air, as John recants, exclaiming "I should like to offend it with you!" Unlike science fiction, where reasons are given for warp drives and time machines, fairy tales make no such pretense at verisimilitude as regards their areas of wonder. James McGlathery stresses the need for this lack of explanation:

> The story's quality as fairy tale can only be preserved if the point or significance of the strange happenings remains mysterious, unexplained, and unrevealed by narrative comment. The hearer, or reader [or viewer], must accept the magic at face value lest the primary and immediate delight in fantasy be lost. We are led to join the storyteller and the figures in the tale in suspension of disbelief. (3)

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[15] Given the complete lack of hesitation towards the magical, mysterious and miraculous, fairy tales do not fall under the designation of the fantastic as posited by Tzvetan Todorov in The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre (1975). Todorov defines the fantastic as "that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event" (25). The characters in fairy tales do not hesitate between the "two possibilities" of the real and the fantastic (26). They accept each with equal ease.

I use the word wonder rather than magic, because there are several tales in the fairy tale tradition which have only traces of explicitly supernatural elements, such as "Bluebeard" or "Little Red Riding Hood." There is more to the genre than "tales in which fairies play a role." McGlathery references Stith Thompson's preference for the German term *Märchen*,[16] which Thompson defined as "[a] tale of some length involving a succession of motifs or episodes. It moves in an unreal world *without definite locality* or *definite characters* and is *filled with the marvelous*" (2, italics mine).

The idea of ambiguous locality and characterization contributing to the sense of wonder or marvel is an extremely useful one in regards to the fairy tale film. Ambiguity in characterization is difficult for modern film to achieve without subsequently alienating its audience, as the greater canon of David Lynch's works attest. The metamorphoses of characters changing from one aspect to another will be discussed at length in the Chapters Four and Seven, but for now we will simply say that the more interchangeable and unstable character roles are, the greater the sense of disconnect on the part of the audience, and consequently, the greater the sense of wonder. Ever After contains all fixed characters, which never shift their persona or form. At the other end of this continuum, we would find more surreal fairy tales such as Valerie and Her Week of Wonders where there is a great deal of ambiguity over each character's role. The same actor who plays Valerie's grandmother plays Elsa, a young vampire who also strongly resembles Valerie's mother, while Valerie's best friend, a young man named Eagle, may be her brother, step-brother, or no relation at

[16] A shortened reference to the German *Zaubermärchen*, "tales of wonder."

all. The certainty of either of these characters roles relies upon the further ambiguity of the character of the Weasel, who appears as a shadowy Catholic priest delivering a mass, a bald pate albino white vampire, reminiscent of Max Shreck's performance of Count Orlock in Nosferatu, and a young man who might be Valerie's father. The level of identity interchanges in fairy tale film is directly related to the sense of wonder that film invokes.

Thompson identifies two worlds in his definition of *Märchen*, when he states that the tales move in an "unreal world without definite locality" (2). Thompson's "definite locality" is the primary world of Tolkien's "On Fairy Stories" (50), while the "unreal world" is Tolkien's concept of the secondary world. In my article "Secondary Worlds and Primary Beliefs" (2004), I demonstrated that an immersive secondary world creates a situation in which "…no suspension of disbelief is necessary because the Secondary World is so complete. It has created within the viewer a sort of secondary belief" (52). In the case of films such as Freeway, which takes place in late 20th-century Los Angeles, the action takes place in the primary world; no suspension of disbelief is necessary, and accordingly, no sense of wonder as a byproduct of magic is produced. On the other hand, films which take place entirely in secondary worlds such as the Steampunk inspired locales in The City of Lost Children, or the entirely medieval otherworld of Ridley Scott's Legend, necessitate a suspension of disbelief. These secondary worlds, created by special effects, are intended to evoke a sense of wonder in the audience. In between the poles of primary and secondary worlds are films which posit a threshold or blurred

demarcation between multiple worlds, such as The Company of Wolves, Valerie and Her Week of Wonders, and our case study, Pan's Labyrinth. The Encyclopedia of Fantasy refers to these as "crosshatch" narratives, in which "two or more worlds may simultaneously inhabit the same territory" (Clute 237).

Setting as a Tool of Wonder

This interplay between primary and secondary worlds is necessary to location, or setting, as a sub-element of the fairy tale film's sense of wonder. Maria Nikolajeva has argued that "fairy tales take place in *one magical world*, detached from our own both in space and time" (141). This one-world theory is built upon the initial fairy tale formula of "once upon a time" and its myriad variants. By way of contrast, the protagonists of fantasy (as opposed to fairy tale) are "transported to some magical realm, and most often, although not always, brought safely back." It is this "anchoring in recognizable reality is the most essential difference in the construction of the universe in fairy tales and in fantasy" (142). The entry on "Fairytale" in The Encyclopedia of Fantasy disagrees with Nikolajeva entirely, stating that the fairytale stories employ an "Into-the-Woods device, marking the transcendence from this world to one more fantastic. Fairytales are thus *often* Crosshatch fantasies, if not set wholly in the Secondary World of Faerie" (331, italics mine). Further, by Nikolajeva's definition, most of what is currently considered fantasy takes place in one secondary world, so that by her definition, J.R.R. Tolkien's fantasy classic Lord of the Rings is ostensibly a fairy tale, not a fantasy.

Furthermore, Lüthi has argued that the formulaic "once upon a time" does not suggest that the tale takes place in a time and space other than our own, but rather to suggest "what once occurred has the tendency continually to recur" (47). It roots the tale in the primary world as a prelude to the journey into the secondary world. In addition, Marina Warner cautions that approaches to the creation of wonder must not, as Nikolajeva's paradigm of fairy tale locality suggests, "[leech] history out of fairy tale." She goes on to add that "[f]airy or wonder tales, however farfetched the incidents they include, or fantastic the enchantments they concoct, take on the color of *the actual circumstances in which they are or were told*" (213, italics mine). It is this connection to the primary world on some level which permits the fairy tale to speak to primary world concerns.

> The marvels and prodigies…all the wonders that create the atmosphere of fairy tale disrupt the apprehensible world in order to open spaces for dreaming alternatives. The verb "to wonder" communicates the receptive state of marveling as well as the active desire to know, to inquire, and as such it defines very well at least two characteristics of the traditional fairy tale: pleasure in the fantastic, curiosity about the real. The dimension of wonder creates a huge theatre of possibility in the stories: anything can happen… The dreaming gives pleasure in its own right, but it also represents a practical dimension to the imagination, an aspect of the faculty of thought, and can unlock social and public possibilities. (Warner xvi)

To suggest that the setting of a fairy tale film is rooted in the primary world is not to say that it takes place there. However familiar the setting may seem, the Secondary World of Faerie "may resemble our own, but the illusion is never entire… Perhaps its geography appears inconsistent, and gothic towers loom incongruously over pastel suburbs, or the behavior of its inhabitants seems weirdly irrational, and grown men squabble like infants over tickets to a chocolate factory" (Worley 25). Worley's "behavior of the inhabitants," when conflated with the lack of "definite characters" in Thompson's *Märchen* definition, suggests that the characters of fairy tale films, like the settings, should be *rooted* in the primary world, while being fully at home in the secondary world. In relation to the "weirdly irrational" behavior of these "inhabitants," Worley references two of Tim Burton's films, Edward Scissorhands (1990) and Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (2005). Burton's films are notorious for their odd-ball characters and wildly imaginative settings. Edward Scissorhands, the film in which "gothic towers loom incongruously over pastel suburbs" will be contrasted with M. Night Shyamalan's The Lady in the Water (2006). Unlike Burton, Shyamalan's work is known for resolutely rational characters in settings which seek to absolutely emulate the natural world. Both filmmakers play these stylistic differences against similar themes of strange and wondrous occurrences. The contrast in how these stylistic differences play out onscreen will serve to demonstrate how salient Thompson's lack of "definite locality or characters" is to fairy tale film.

Shyamalan's Lady in the Water is set in modern-day Philadelphia in a very normal, unarguably primary world apartment housing complex. The tenants of this apartment housing are representative of a number of demographics, ranging from a group of pot-heads to a well-respected film critic. Aside from their quirks and oddities, they are essentially "normal people," who are confronted with the miraculous, and respond to it with an unaccountable depth of belief, inconsistent with the primary world setting.

Burton's characters share this unassuming faith in the fairytale events unfolding before them. It is easier, however, to accept the irrational actions of Diane Wiest's character Peg bringing Johnny Depp as the artificial man with scissors for hands into her home, given that she found him in a dark gothic castle (a secondary world) at the top of a hill overlooking a hyper-stylized vision of 1980s American suburbia (a primary world). Despite the exaggerated look of the locale, it is at least still recognizable, while the addition of the gothic mansion contrasted with the ridiculously pastel cookie-cutter domiciles beneath it gives it distance from the world we know and live in. It is familiar, yet somehow quite different. By means of an illustration, take the challenge to imagine substitutions for classic gothic settings, such as "Jonathan Harker imprisoned in Count Dracula's suburban Cape Cod" with the conclusion that "the pendulum just isn't the same without the pit" (Bailey 4). It is more than the obviously disturbing quality of the Gothic castle's "awesome antiquity, vast distances and ramblings, deserted or ruined wings, damp corridors, unwholesome hidden catacombs and galaxy of ghosts" which serve to make it "a nucleus of

suspense and daemoniac fright" (Lovecraft, Supernatural Horror, 25). One needs only to consider the artistic approach of the set-designers of The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920), a film which had a profound impact on Tim Burton's aesthetic approach to understand how Gaston Bachelard's Poetics of Space proposed "a new field of investigation…that would be attuned to the way architecture and space affect… inner psychological states" (qtd. in Kaufman 59).

> Caligari's architectural realization by the set designers Walter Reimann, Hermann Warm, and Walter Röhrig lends it a definitive design principle throughout. A total of 33 different sets were used. The painted views, which distort the sites of the action in perspective and tip them off balance, give the sets a claustrophobic atmosphere in which the actors move like ghosts. The walls of the city streets are covered with enigmatic graffiti. The specifications for the décor determined the camera work and lighting as well. Shadows painted on scenery produced the contrasts between light and dark, while the usually static and neutral camera opened up the sites of the action from the front. Apart from the distorted shapes of the scenery, the obvious artificiality of the sets was programmatic in a more general sense. Reimann felt strongly that film should not try to imitate reality, but should *create its own world* through the simple means of stagecraft. He repeatedly pointed out the distinct differences between actual architecture and film sets and insisted that the term *film architecture* should be replaced by *film painting*." (Neumann 52, italics mine)

Shyamalan uses film architecture rather than "film painting" for the locale for Lady in the Water. His fairy tale takes place in a very real world *mise-en-scène*, which is one of the reasons I would suggest for the film's poor public response and negative critical reviews; modern audiences are very much concerned with plausibility within the framework of the film being made. If a film's visual cues tell the audience the narrative takes place in the primary world, it will be more difficult to accept the miraculous occurring. Further, if the actions of primary world inhabitants exhibit rational behavior at the outset of the narrative, the audience has been given no indication they will later accept the miraculous. Imagine the same storyline of Lady in the Water set in one of Burton's "film-painted" sets. One need only consider the architecture of Charlie Bucket's ramshackle dwelling on the edge of town in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory to begin to extrapolate how Burton might treat an apartment complex where a fairy tale is about to take place. Further, if one imagines the ludicrous leaps of rationality the characters in Lady in the Water are subjected to, performed with the whimsy and comic sensibility of Jonny Depp in both aforementioned Burton films, it aids in understanding how important the treatment of location and characterization are for the fairy tale film.

Movie Magic: Special Effects

While the treatment of location and character are tantamount to the sense of wonder in fairy tale film, any discussion of magic or wonder in the cinematic medium demands attention be paid to the mechanical devices employed to realize what is

often referred to as "movie magic": special effects. Prior to the advent of CGI technology, representing "the marvelous" successfully in cinematic presentations of the fairytale was largely the domain of animated films. Stith Thompson praised the merits of the animated medium in the 1940s, specifically citing Disney's Snow White since "creatures of the folk imagination can be constructed with ease and given lifelike qualities" (461). Fairy tale films utilizing real actors were either unsuccessful in conveying a convincing set of wonder, or so focused on the mechanics of the special effects necessary to generate wonder that other elements of the film suffered in the process. There are a few exceptions to this trend, notably The Wizard of Oz (1939) and La Belle et la bête (1946), both made at a time prior to the post-ILM jading of audiences expecting bigger and better special effects. While CGI technology is ostensibly a form of animation, it produces far more "realistic" effects, without sacrificing the ease of creation Thompson praised traditional cell animation for. This ease has enabled a new generation of fairy tale films to be produced containing fully realized secondary worlds in which real actors can play out their roles, as evidenced in such stylistically immersive works as Neil Gaiman's Mirrormask.

However, no matter how immersive, masterful special effects or animation do not guarantee enchantment. The utilization of special effects to create representations of what film producers imagine a magical world and its associated delights looks like does not guarantee a sense of wonder, even when the subject matter of the film is concerned with fairy tales proper. To be certain, animation or immersive special effects *can* evoke a sense of wonder, but the presence of even the best special effect

does not guarantee a sense of wonder. In the post CGI filmmaking world, where entire films are shot on green stages, enabling the pure realization of Neumann's "film painting," special effects can become tedious or overwhelm the eye to the point where the effects cease to be special and instead become spectacle, focusing entirely on the dreaming being a "pleasure in its own right," and ignoring the need for the visualization of the fantastic world to help us "see the actual world… [to] universalize the narrative setting, encipher concerns, beliefs and desires in brilliant, seductive images that are themselves a form of camouflage, making it possible to utter harsh truths, to say what you dare" (Warner xvi-xvii). By ironic contrast, many films succeed in utilizing wonder (for these purposes) not through a constant barrage of phantasmagoria, but by contrasting the miraculous with the mundane.

In Ever After, a "'historigraphic retelling of 'Cinderella,'" there is an absence of magic, but not an absence of wonder. Drew Barrymore as Danielle DeBarbarac arrives at the prince's ball, not through the aid of a fairy godmother, but through the intervention of Leonardo DaVinci and the "magical" technology of his scientific wonders. While DaVinci's "butterfly wings may appear magical, they rely on human craft for their effects"[17] (Gruner 150). Nevertheless, despite the absence of talking mice, pumpkin chariot and footmen who will revert to dogs at the stroke of midnight, the moment when Danielle steps into the palace courtyard, dressed for the ball, is obviously crafted to evoke a sense of wonder, which awakens "our regard for the

[17] To be completely fair, the use of science in a pre-industrial age such as the medieval mise-en-scène of Ever After should be portrayed with a definite sense of wonder, since alchemy and what we term magic now were merely early scientific practices.

miraculous condition of life and to evoke in a religious sense profound feelings of awe and respect for life as a miraculous process" (Spells of Enchantment xiv).

There are several scenes in Finding Neverland (2004) involving seamless changes from J.M Barrie's Primary World of *fin de siècle* London to the secondary worlds of Barrie's imagination. In one instance, the perspective cuts back and forth between a childlike, stylized representation of an Old West town, complete with desert and mesa in the distance, and Sylvia Davies' primary world back-yard. At one moment, Johnny Depp as Barrie crouches behind a barrel in the town with the desert landscape in the distance, trailing off to the horizon, and the next moment we see that he is actually sitting in front of a wall in the corner of the yard. In another, Barrie imagines Sylvia's boys flying out the window of their room, when in truth they are simply jumping on their beds. We see this imagined reality with only a slight change in the soundtrack's score and a modification of film speed to signify the sense of wonder. They are simple effects, but particularly effective at illustrating the marvelous. The most poignant instance of this liminal shift occurs when Barrie stages an encore performance of "Peter Pan" for a bed-ridden Sylvia, dying of cancer. The cast and a spartan stage are seen in the Davies' living room; the scene where Peter asks the audience to rescue a dying Tinkerbell by clapping to demonstrate their belief in fairy tales gives way to the rear wall of the living room rising like a curtain to reveal a hyper saturated landscape filled with Pirates, Indians and fairies. As Peter flies from the living room into this imagined reality, the cast, the Davies family and Barrie step into this tableau. "That," Depp as Barrie whispers to Sylvia, "Is

Neverland." Sylvia is lead by a fairy procession into the imagined Neverland; the shot becomes increasingly dark until only Sylvia remains visible in light. Finally, the entire shot grows dark, and the camera fades in on Sylvia's real world funeral.

This is not to imply that only primary world settings can allow for the necessary contrast by which special effects remain effective in instilling a sense of wonder. While considered by many to be fantasy and not fairy tale, Peter Jackson's Lord of the Rings trilogy evoked wonder in audiences by creating special effects possessing a sense of the mundane about them, thereby blending into their surroundings, unlike the bombastic riot of primary colored effects in Ella Enchanted. Jay Duncan, editor of Cinefex, a quarterly magazine devoted to special effects, commented that Lord of the Rings was noteworthy for "the way the effects were integrated into the story… None of them seemed to be done for the purpose of spectacle and spectacle alone" (qtd. in Snider 06d).

Location, Characterization and the Marvelous in Pan's Labyrinth

The sense of wonder in Pan's Labyrinth is presented in the opening moments of the film, introducing all elements contributing to the film's sense of wonder. The prologue begins with the voice-over narration of a fairy tale combined with images of an underground kingdom, an obviously magical location; to say a kingdom is "underground" is to effectively remove it from a spatial location which can be arrived at through normal means. It is obviously a secondary world. The tale goes on to tell of a fairy princess who becomes curious about the world above (the primary world), but

when she goes to the surface, she forgets about her life in the underworld and grows old and dies as a mortal. Her father, the king believes that her spirit will come back to the underworld someday. The film now moves from this secondary world beginning to the primary world of post-Civil War Spain in 1944, the first of many such movements between worlds, echoing the ontological alternation of Finding Neverland. In contrast to Neverland, even the primary world of Pan's Labyrinth is photographed in a style which evokes wonder –golden hued woods with backlit, haloed pollen falling magically down on a convoy of cars slowly moving along a dirt road. Unlike Shyamalan's apartment complex which is situated with geographic precision in primary-world-Philadelphia, the destination of the cavalcade lacks precise geographic location. It is simply a mill in the woods of Spain, and so the real-world location of Pan's Labyrinth is decidedly ambiguous, and therefore somewhat "secondary" as well. Further, this real-world Spain takes place in a time which seems very distant to the ultra-modern digital landscape of the twenty-first century viewer. By setting the action over fifty years into the past, Del Toro further removes the filmic space from the everyday experience of the audience. Del Toro states in his production notes on the DVD that stylistically, the demarcation between these two realms is further emphasized through a lack of detail and color in the real world. The secondary world of magic is more detailed, highly saturated in color.

This cavalcade bears the film's protagonist, a little girl named Ofelia, a girl on the edge of adolescence who believes in fairy tales. Like Gerda stepping from her late nineteenth century Europe into a world filled with magic, Ofelia has left the big city

to travel to these seemingly magical woods to begin a new life. Ofelia's perception of the woods as magical is clear almost immediately. When the cavalcade stops to allow her pregnant mother a brief respite and Ofelia walks to a standing stone engraved with Celtic knotwork, a stick insect emerges. "I saw a fairy," she tells her mother, demonstrating the requisite "child-sight" of the fairy tale hero,[18] who Lüthi notes is "not astonished by miracles and magic; he accepts them as if they were a matter of course" (46).

This child sight is essential to the fairy tale hero or heroine. In the climactic scene of Pan's Labyrinth, Ofelia is speaking to a denizen of the Labyrinth, a magical Faun. The focalization of the scene switches momentarily as Captain Vidal enters in pursuit of Ofelia. From Vidal's vantage point, there is only Ofelia; he cannot see the Faun she is speaking to. In George MacDonald's The Princess and the Goblin, Princess Irene sits in a room "large and lofty, and dome-shaped. From the centre hung a lamp as round as a ball, shining as if with the brightest moonlight, which made everything visible in the room… A large oval bed stood in the middle, with a coverlid of rose colour, and velvet curtains all round it of a lovely pale blue. The walls were also blue—spangled all over with what looked like stars of silver" (89). Her enigmatic and somewhat fey Grandmother tells her "if that light were to go out you would fancy yourself lying in a bare garret, on a heap of old straw, and would not see one of the pleasant things round about you all the time" (91). Her child-sight allows her to see things as they are in Faerie, not the world everyone else can apprehend. It is

[18] Worley refers to this in relation to Cocteau's "plea for faith in the power of the fairy tale" at the opening of Cocteau's La Belle et la bête as "Tinkerbell's Law," which "states that fantasy stories will only come alive and work when one commits belief" (47).

the sort of perception required to hear the ring of the bell bequeathed to the young boy in The Polar Express (2004); children who still believe in Santa can hear its ring, but unbelieving children and adults cannot. The presence of children in fairy tale film is necessary because of this ability to sense the supernatural, a sixth sense, to invoke the title of the M. Night Shyamalan film which features a young boy who is able to see and interact with ghosts (1999). This is a common theme in contemporary fairy tale film: the idea that the child has enough faith or innocence to perceive what adults cannot.

Terry Pratchett playfully describes the idea of child-sight in his Christmas novel, Hogfather:

> The previous governess had used various monsters and bogeymen as a form of discipline. There was always something waiting to eat or carry off bad boys and girls for crimes like stuttering or defiantly and aggravatingly persisting in writing with their bad hand … Susan's attempts at getting [the children] to disbelieve in the things had only caused the problems to get worse.
>
> Susan had found out about…the terrible clawed creature [Twyla] was certain lived under [the bed] the first night when the child had woken up crying because of a bogeyman in the closet.
>
> She'd sighed and gone to have a look. She'd been so angry that she'd pulled it out, hit it over the head with the nursery poker, dislocated its shoulders as a means of emphasis and kicked it out of the back door.

> The children refused to disbelieve in the monsters, because, frankly, they knew damn well the things were there.
>
> But she'd found that they could, very firmly, also believe in the poker. (36-37)

This child-sight is a key to the element of magic and wonder in fairy tale films. When a fairy tale film is viewed without some inner child-sight, a hearkening back to the days when one believed in monsters under the bed, or Santa Claus, or any number of other childhood superstitions the result is confusion, or dismissive criticism. Nearly half the chapter on Good and Evil will explore how children view the subject before moving on to how an adult might perceive it, since as Wordsworth suggested paradoxically, "The Child is father of the Man" (qtd. in Goodenough 337). Even in the case of films such as Pan's Labyrinth, which contain imagery too harsh for young viewers, the audience must regain their own child-sight or risk missing out on the potential sense of wonder the film contains.

Consequently, Ofelia's focalization of the events of Pan's Labyrinth is one of the strongest keys to its sense of wonder; her reaction to the metamorphosis of the stick bug into an actual fairy is wonder, not disbelief, and so too should the audience's be. When the fairy beckons her to follow, she doesn't hesitate, but instead follows it down a spiral stone staircase into a dark labyrinth where she meets an ancient, decrepit Faun. The Faun's appearance is somewhat monstrous, but rather than running in fear, Ofelia merely introduces herself and asks the Faun its name. The Faun tells Ofelia that she is Princess Moanna, "daughter of the king of the

Underworld." Ofelia protests that her father was a tailor, but even before she verifies a birthmark in the shape of the moon marking her as the Princess, she has already accepted "The Book of Crossroads" and begun her series of tasks to permit her to return to her "Father's" kingdom.

Ofelia is clearly the iconic "little girl" in the deep dark woods of so many fairy tales. Her character is well rounded enough to evoke a sense of verisimilitude, but not developed enough that we know her hopes and aspirations for adulthood and who her relatives are aside from her mother and deceased father. She is an ambiguous enough character to carry the sense of wonder necessary for a fairy tale film, part of the sisterhood of Gretel, Red Riding Hood, Gerda and so many others.

Likewise, the rest of the cast fulfill iconic roles as well. The nature of these roles will be explored at length in the next two chapters, but for now we will quickly identify them in broad, genre terms to demonstrate the meaning they represent. The widowed mother, formerly the wife of a kind shoe-maker, is now wed to an evil military lord (the narrative wastes no time in convincing the audience of Captain Vidal's monstrosity; he beats a man to death with a bottle early in the film). There is a group of freedom fighters who even now are planning to overthrow the forces of evil and free the land from its tyrannical grip. Del Toro deftly weaves levels of reality and archetypal characterization through the players, allowing the audience to identify with them on the level of reality, but also to accept the fairy tale framework in their ambiguity. We accept that Vidal is bad, with no goodness in him, and that Ofelia is

the promised child who will be able to set things right because of her child-like faith in the realm of Faerie. These all support the sense of wonder.

Unlike Shyamalan again, Del Toro is never forcedly explicit with the identity of these characters; if characters are iconic enough, explication of identity is unnecessary. It is due to the lack of fairy tale characterization in Lady in the Water that the script is forced to include lengthy exposition identifying fairy tale persona, listed off as the interpreter, guardian, guild, and healer. One can't help but feel the suggestion that these words ought to be said as though they start with capital letters, but it ends up seeming more a narrative exposition of Joseph Campbell's The Hero With A Thousand Faces (1968) than simply telling a story. The sense of wonder is lost in the explanations. Real fairy tale magic eschews explanation. The sense of wonder comes from the location and the characters, not from a preponderance of special effects, or from telling the audience over and over that something wonderful is happening. Contrivance will not produce wonder or magic.

The way in which Del Toro incorporates the special effects speaks to this; the location suits the denizens of Faerie. Finding a mermaid in a well-cleaned pool in Philadelphia is very different from finding a faun at the bottom of an ancient well located at the center of a crumbling ruin of a labyrinth located next to an archaic-looking mill in the middle of dense forest. The former lacks the right sense of ambiguous locale; if Lady in the Water had been set in a dilapidated resort at the edge of the ocean, far from the city, it might have gained more power. It is easier to design a faun who appears to be made out of branches and leaves if the setting in which the

faun appears contains many ancient trees looming overhead. Likewise, one might buy into the idea of hell-hounds made from lawn grass more if that lawn, rather than being well-tended, was so overgrown you could lose a car in it.

Del Toro has chosen a location that allows for an organic, "crosshatch" transition from primary world settings to its secondary ontologies. The first appearance of a fairy in the film is disguised as a stick-bug. When it transforms, the audience is prepared for the possibility of magic being in the air because of how Ofelia has interacted with the location, finding the mysterious standing stone and calling the stick-bug a fairy.[19] This is a further aspect of the ambiguity of the setting of Pan's Labyrinth. The liminal moments of transition from Spain to Faerie occur only after Ofelia has named them so. So the question in the audience's mind must be, is it all a fabrication of her imagination, or is she actually a long-lost fairy princess invested with the ability to change the reality around her, returning stick-bugs to their rightful aspect as fairies, and awakening long-sleeping Fauns in their dark labyrinths? The film never clearly answers this question, thankfully, so that our sense of wonder remains. While it is true that Vidal does not see the Faun, we also know that Ofelia escapes a locked room after being given a piece of chalk by the mysterious Faun, who tells her to "create your own door." We cannot explain away the magic of Pan's Labyrinth as mere imagination, nor should we feel the need to believe in the

[19] Warren Buckland calls this approach "visible special effects masquerading as invisible special effects" which is to say that "the digital images combine the aesthetics of both visible and invisible special effects, since they have the potential to replicate the realism and illusionism of the photographic image by conferring a perfect photographic credibility upon objects that do not exist in the real world" (184-85).

secondary ontology of Faerie outside the realm of imagination. It remains ambiguous, mysterious, and magical.

Chapter 04: Gender and Sexuality: Narratives of Transgression and Transformation

X-Rated Fairy Tale Erotica

In the introduction to his work Fairy Tale Romance, James McGlathery states the first thing English-speaking persons think of at the mention of the term "fairy tale" is "magical stories about beautiful princesses finding and marrying handsome princes" (1). We have already spoken of the magical story, so now we move on to the subject of beautiful princesses and handsome princes, or for our purposes, gender and sexuality. Even the most sanitized versions of fairy tales are concerned with issues of gender and sexuality, albeit a sublimated sexuality, driven underground over the course of multiple literary retellings or, as in the case in the Grimms' collections, through deliberate editorial omission. As Catherine Orenstein has stated, "[f]airy tales are at their core about sexuality – about the codes and manners and qualities and behaviors that society deems desirable, and thus which makes us desirable to each other. They are about establishing and defining our ideas about gender—what makes a man, what makes a woman—at the most basic level" (211). Fairy tales across the canon of tradition address these issues with all the complexity of real world relationships, not confining the discourse to one expression of sexuality, but instead being uncomfortably inclusive:

> We appear to have here documentation and reflection of a popular wisdom about brothers and sisters being sweet on one another; virgin's fantasies about the wedding night; fathers' incestuous feelings toward their daughters and mothers' toward their sons; older women's identification with younger

> women as objects of desire; women's instincts for winning and keeping a man; and the cold feet experienced by bridegrooms and bachelors over the prospect of marrying. (McGlathery 196-97)

The earliest version of Little Red Riding Hood, "The Story of Grandmother," contains what amounts to a striptease when the little girl asks the wolf, "Where should I put my apron?" to which the wolf replies, "Throw it into the fire, my child. You won't be needing it any more." These two phrases are repeated over and over, with different clothing items replacing the already discarded ones until the little girl is obviously naked, at which point she immediately gasps at how hairy the wolf is (qtd. in Tatar 10-11). Basile's version of Sleeping Beauty is said to be a "story of rape, adultery, sexual rivalry" (Hallet and Karasek 18), while beast-bride tales deal with "courtship rituals and…the morning after" (Tatar 28).

Throughout its history, fairy tale literature has been "associated with erotic and immoral literature dangerous for the bodies and souls of children" (Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell*, 211). Consequently, there is a temptation to understand all of the sexuality in fairy tales as being lewd, or to put it in more child-like terms, "naughty".[20] This is not what is meant exclusively by gender and sexuality as a key element used in fairy-tale film. It is true that contemporary modes of eroticism or pornography have been used in fairy tale film, as in Walerian Borowczyk's infamous La Bête, an adaptation of Beauty and the Beast expressed via "a prolonged orgasmic dream in which an insatiable ursine monster, sporting an obscenely large and

[20] The discovery of the lewd past of fairy tales prompted a movement in fantasy literature to produce "adult fairy tales" which often resulted in either gorier or sexually explicit versions of the tales, rather than adding anything genuinely new or transformational to the genre.

continually spouting pecker, chases a woman through the woods Benny Hill-fashion, before lustily deflowering her" (61). Worley observes this film (and I argue that the long list of pornographic[21] fairy-tale adaptations such as Fairy Tales (1979), Cinderella (1977), Alice in Wonderland (1976), Naked Fairy Tales (2003) and Perverted Tales (2003) fall under this denunciation[22]) as being "less interested in revising fairy tale than in watching its actors get it on" (61).

Orenstein takes an ambivalent view of the pornographic fairy tale film, stating that "the debate over its merits is moot—since porn is here and here to stay" (209). She argues, through the case study of The Punishment of Little Red Riding Hood (1996) that hardcore pornography can tell us something about fairy tales, that it "uncovers the fairy tale's erotic pulse" (210) as though erotic pulses were something which remain hidden in this day and age of Sex in the City and free Internet porn. The question to be asked is not whether porn can tell us something, but whether porn's contribution to fairy tale film is salient to this discussion. Consider Orenstein's own conclusion that porn's discovery of the fairy tale is unremarkable, since "porn

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[21] My use of the word "pornographic" throughout this chapter refers to media whose primary purpose is titillation. Two terms will be employed to signify explicit sexuality onscreen, using Jerrold Levinson's suggested "intuitions on the erotic and the pornographic." These intuitions are as follows: "the erotic and the pornographic are both concerned with sexual stimulation or arousal [and that] while the term erotic is neutral or even approving, the term 'pornographic' is pejorative or disapproving … [and finally that] whereas pornography has a paramount aim, namely, the sexual satisfaction of the viewer, erotic art, even if it also aims at the sexual satisfaction on some level, includes other aims of significance" (228-29). Levinson concludes by saying that "nothing can succeed as erotic art and pornography at the same time" (239) a contention this paper is in agreement with.

[22] A website for a b-horror movie festival said the following about the film: "If one chooses to view the film as 'Art,' it is a ribald, satirical exploration of family dysfunction that is reminiscent of the taboo-breaking films of Luis Bunuel. On the other hand, *The Beast* is one of the greatest sexploitation monster movies ever made. Art films rarely feature a giant hairy monster (with a huge erection that randomly spews gallons of spunk) running through the forest in pursuit of a nubile young beauty for hot sex (except in Japan)" (holehead.org).

exploits virtually *any* scenario: from the boardroom, to the classroom, to the tennis court" (209). The agenda of porn is not narrative—it is titillation. I would agree with Orenstein's definition of pornography as "material that *can* be found arousing" (209, italics mine), but only as an *element* of the fairy tale film, not the prime motivation. Orenstein notes that "fairy tale porn is not concerned with fidelity to tradition" (210). Therefore, its prime directive is not to revise the fairy tale, but to create a marketable product for the sex trade, or at the very most, merely spoof the genre. The only elements hardcore pornography appropriates for inclusion are those which motivate the sex act, belying a very narrow understanding of sexuality, wherein "one's sexuality must be defined, it seems, in terms of one's sexual desire" (Tyson 317).

Angela Carter has argued, both explicitly in her interviews and essays as well as implicitly in her short fiction, that the "latent content [of fairy tales] is violently sexual" (qtd. in Sheets 642), casting a type of pornography in a positive light. However, she is associating them with ballad and dream, which she calls "subliterary forms of pornography" (642), not the hardcore pornography of Silicon Valley. As Robin Ann Sheets effectively argues in "Pornography, Fairy Tales and Feminism," Carter's "The Bloody Chamber" uses "pornography as a critique of the current relations between the sexes" (655). While Carter's revisionist retelling of the Bluebeard story is graphic with images of sadomasochism, they are presented, not for titillation, but for transformation through a subversion of Perrault's version which decried female curiosity as a vice.[23] As will be explored later, it is this feminine

[23] This would make "The Bloody Chamber" a form of erotic art, not pornography by Levinson's definition.

curiosity, a renunciation of patriarchy's imposed (and ostensibly skewed) paradigm of virtue or vice, which is a defining merit of many fairy tale heroines. A study of fairy tale porn might prove an interesting culture study, but explicit graphic sex intended solely for titillation is not the focus of this chapter, though that is not to say that it precludes its presence in fairy tale films.

While rather tame by today's standards, Valerie and Her Week of Wonders stands as an excellent example of how graphic sex and nudity can be used as an element of a fairy tale film focusing on the sexual transformation, not sexual consummation of its protagonist. Within the context of the early 1970s, the film would have been considered soft core porn, and lewd enough to warrant its censure, but viewed against the sexual ethic of American Pie (1999), the movie handles Valerie's budding sexuality with "a refreshing lack of salaciousness" (Groves). Indeed, while 14-year-old star Jaroslava Schallerova appears in several states of undress throughout the film, the most powerful imagery of Valerie's awakening sexuality is visually indirect: hypnotically alluring earrings which her grandmother implies are symbols of sensual indulgence; a drop of blood falling upon a white daisy signals the onset of her menstrual cycle; Valerie clutching her own budding breasts while watching older, more physically developed women frolic in a stream speaks of her awareness of the physical changes she is experiencing, and her anticipation of growing up; wine spilled on a white tablecloth at a wedding signifying the breaking of a virgin's hymen; vampires as a metaphor for uncontrollable lust.

The erotically charged film Sirens, infamous more for the supermodel Elle MacPherson appearing nude than for its narrative, explores feminine curiosity, and while it is not considered a fairy tale film proper, it dances on the edges of the five elements explored in this study. Sirens fulfills four of the five criteria, with only the struggle between good and evil being entirely absent, although it could be argued that the theological discourse between young minister Anthony Campion and Norman Lindsay, artist of the blasphemous erotic painting "Crucified Venus," serves as a type of moral struggle. The film is certainly imbued with a sense of wonder. It makes direct visual reference to fairy tales on several occasions; one scene in particular features three women dressed as fairies playing on swings, illuminated by electric light in the dark of night for the delight of small children. In another, Anthony's wife, Estella, admires what she perceives to be a statue, but which is actually one of the models, standing in still repose in the moonlight. The subjects of Lindsay's paintings are all fantastic, referencing myth and legend. At the end of the film, Estella experiences a transformational sexual awakening, the result of that problematic feminine curiosity, illustrated in an oneiric scene: Estella descends into a pond, dressed in white, and falls backward into the water; while she lays on the surface, the three models rise naked from underneath the water, and lovingly caress Estella's body. The point of the dream is awakening, not arousal, as evidenced by Estella whispering "I want to wake up now." She wakes to a brilliant morning, but also to an embrace of an expression of her femininity she had not previously experienced; when

she discovers that Lindsay has painted her nude as one of the Greek Sirens, she states simply, "[i]t's a good likeness."

Both of these films employ indirect means as often as they do explicit ones to communicate sexuality. In her discussion of what constitutes pornography in Sex and the Cinema, Tanya Krzywinska explores indirect representations of sex in cinema:

> Certain themes, conventions and stylistic devices have been reiterated so regularly that they have come to provide powerful shorthand ways of invoking fairly complex ideas. Such devices may provide ways and means of suggesting sex without actually showing it. …The onscreen kiss is often acceptable as an indicator of love or passion; perhaps the kiss invokes romance more effectively than is the case with the fleshly presence of "vulgar, groaning fornication" (Žižek 1991:110). Nonetheless the coyness within which sex is so often treated in mainstream cinema constructs more fleshly encounters as taboo, giving them an edge that adds up to greater sensationalist impact. (2006: 28-30)

The Chaste Courtship of the "Fairy Tale" Romance

The other most commonly misconstrued understanding of gender and sexuality in fairy tale films is the "fairy tale romance," in which boy meets girl in an entirely chaste fashion, falls in love and lives happily ever after, films "in which every prince looks like a badly drawn portrait of Cary Grant [and] every princess a sex symbol" (Frances Clark Sayer in Koven 177), as is the case in so many of Disney's

adaptations. As Gould notes, "[i]n place of transformation, Disney puts romance at the core of woman's life" (25). The tales are changed to become "musical romances in which a young couple fall in love the instant they meet but must overcome the monster-parent before they can marry" (25). Consider Disney's version of Beauty and the Beast (1991), which relies almost entirely on de Beaumont's version, wherein the male transformation from beast to man following the wedding night (Tatar, Classic Fairy Tales, 28) has been entirely sublimated.[24]

This equation of the chaste romance with the fairy tale has produced a number of films that are better classified as romance or romantic comedies. In the The Princess Bride, one of the more humorous scenes is devoted to the topic of "true love," as soliloquized by a bishop with a speech impediment, who glides his liquids, pronouncing "love" as "wuv." This film, more than any other, was invoked whenever I have spoken with people informally about this study, due largely, I assume, to the idea of fairy tales having something to do with formulaic romance stories. This type of romance is commonly referenced as a "fairy tale romance," which is to say that the girl gets the boy in the end, or vice versa.

The prevalence of the conflation of the fairy tale with an idealized romantic relationship can be demonstrated simply be perusing greeting cards for newlyweds. One after another carries the all-too-famous fairy tale benediction: "and they lived happily ever after." But as McGlathery warns us, "it is of course mistaken to believe

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[24] And rightly so, given Disney's target audience. As will be discussed in the chapter on the politics of good and evil, I am not a proponent of complex moralities being included for children of young ages. I am not saying that Disney's Beauty and the Beast is a poor film, but rather stating that it simplifies the connotations of sex and gender in the tale.

that everything we call fairy tale is a story of magical romance" (1), despite its prolific popular connotation.

One of the more interesting treatments of the "fairy tale romance" in a fairy tale film is Enchanted (2007), Disney's self-parody of its "princess" fairy tales. The film is effectively Disney deconstructing Disney, a parody not in the sense of ridicule or humorous imitation, but as "indirect criticism [and] flattering tribute to the original" (Harmon and Holman 376). The movie both lampoons and honors the "Princess" fairy tale films of the Disney canon, with visual and textual nods throughout. The film begins in iconic Disney cell animation, introducing Giselle, the "princess" of this fairy tale romance. In the opening musical number,[25] Giselle sings of "true love's kiss," which is the "something you must do … before two can become one." While younger audiences will miss the innuendo entirely, the line references Genesis 2:24, which states that "a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh" (NIV). Giselle's song disseminates the core of the chaste fairy tale romance, wherein the concept of sexual union is always implied through the seeking of "one true love" and the inevitable happily-ever-after wedding at the end of the story. However, the wedding is always the consummation of the fairy tale romance. We never see the morning after. In truth, there is no morning after to be seen, since, as Giselle reminds us, "*lips* are the only thing that touch" (italics mine). Not hips nor hands and certainly no one stripping in front of the

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[25] Enchanted features a musical score written by Alan Menken, famous for his work on the films responsible for Disney's "comeback" in the 1990s with The Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast and Aladdin, to name a few, further advancing the simultaneity of spoof and homage.

fireplace to climb into bed with a wolf. Fairy tale romances do not involve sex, only kissing.

Further, fairy tale romance is a type of magical spell which overwhelms the couple. When Giselle and her "one true love," the vapid and self-important Prince Edward, meet for the first time, their courtship is alarmingly brief.

Giselle: Oh, it's you.

Prince Edward: Yes, it's me. And you are?

Giselle: Giselle.

Prince Edward: Oh, Giselle! We shall be married in the morning!

However, before the wedding can take place, Giselle is transported by the evil Queen Narissa to modern day New York, where she is, appropriately, no longer a two-dimensional cell-animated Princess, but a flesh-and-blood woman played by Amy Andrews: she has gained 'depth'. It is in New York, a place "where there is no happily-ever-after," that Giselle meets a separated, single-parent divorce lawyer named Robert Philip, who in a brilliant piece of intertextual casting, is played by Patrick Dempsey. Since 2005, Dempsey has played Dr. Derek Shepherd on Grey's Anatomy, a television series which bases its drama around broken and codependent relationships. There are no "fairy tale romances" on Grey's Anatomy, and so Dempsey as Robert Philip embodies the contemporary cynicism towards the idea that love is something that lasts. When Giselle informs Robert that she met Prince Edward only the day before, Robert's reaction is incredulity. He tries to correct her, saying,

"You mean it feels like a day because you're so in love" to which Giselle replies, "No. It's been a day."

Robert suggests that "[m]ost normal people get to know each other before they get married. They date." Giselle responds by telling Robert that he has "such strange ideas about love." However, when Giselle and Prince Edward are reunited and Edward presses to return to the magical kingdom of "Andalusia," to be married immediately, Giselle demands that they go on a date first. Throughout the date, Prince Edward is bored and impatient. When Giselle informs him that she just wants to get to know him, he is stunned. By the end of the film, Giselle will have eschewed her "one true love" to be with Robert Philip and his daughter, certainly to live "happily-ever-after," but in a final montage that suggests that love is something chosen and worked upon, not a spell to be fallen under.

Transformative Power of Sexuality in Fairy Tale Film

Gender and sexuality in the fairy tale film – just like in the folk tale and fairy tale—are neither trite romance nor explicit coupling; rather, issues directly pertaining to the difficult and complex construction of gender as well as the mysterious and wonderful realm of sexuality are the task at hand. In the genre of fairy tale, sexual awakening reflects the process of the sexual formation of the subject and constitutes one of the more significant transformations affecting the hero or heroine. However, film is a medium constrained by sometimes simplistic visual shorthand to communicate more complex concepts. As a result, the complexity of representation of gender and

sexuality in fairy tale films are visually transmitted using images which, upon first viewing, seem to lack a gendered or sexual dimension. This complex approach to sexuality and gender in fairy tale films is sometimes so indirect that North American audiences miss it entirely. Consider a review for Ginger Snaps which stated that "[t]he film was marketed as being very sexual in tone, but the film really does not spend much time focusing on this aspect of the story" (Winkelspecht), missing the film's primary metaphor of lycanthropy *as puberty* entirely.

We have already referenced two versions of "Beauty and the Beast" as they relate to blatant erotica and sentimental love story. To illustrate this more complex idea of gender and sexuality being communicated through metonymic shorthand we turn to another version of the same tale, Cocteau's La Belle et la bête. Throughout the film, Cocteau relies throughout the film on a number of images which are sexually evocative rather than explicit. "The very masonry of the Beast's tumbledown chateau is as supple as flesh, with disembodied arms holding candelabra, and watchful caryatids exhaling smoke beside the fireplace.... [Belle] voyeuristically spies on [the Beast] in all his monstrous glory, and in a sly erotic scene he laps water from her cupped hands" (Worley 47-48). Belle is not the only voyeur in the Beast's castle. The space of Belle's bedroom itself perpetuates an ambience of voyeurism. The door beckons Belle inside with an inviting whisper; the statuary watches her with sidelong looks, and the bed is made up with sheets which move of their own accord. Finally, Belle's bedroom contains a talking mirror which allows the user to view their heart's desire, a magical tool for both Belle and the Beast's voyeuristic courtship. The Beast

engages in a number of voyeuristic activities as well, spying on Belle in the magic mirror, boldly asking if Belle will permit him to watch her dine at a table filled with sumptuous foods,[26] and in her absence, goes to her bedside to caress her bed sheets, pressing them to his face to inhale her scent. Despite the lack of conjugal consummation, either implied or explicit, as well as the film's sober and complex handling of the slowly building affection between the Beast and Belle, Worley describes the film as "vividly sensualized" (47), demonstrating that gender and sexuality are conveyed effectively (if not more so) without resorting to explicit sex acts or formulaic "fairy tale" romances. We have defined gender and sexuality as being more than simply the inclination of one's sexual desire, stating that the concept of sexual identity consists of "directing the bulk of one's attention and emotional energy" to other people, men, women or both "as one's primary source of emotional sustenance and psychological support" (325). This then includes far more than the "romantic" relationships between lovers. Gender and sexuality in the fairy tale film encompasses all types of relationships, from friendship, to family, as well as ultimately, with ourselves, as is evidenced in the treatment of sex and gender in Pan's Labyrinth.

Pan's Labyrinth: Trees with Fallopian Tubes for Branches

[26] As will be established at length in the discussion of Pan's Labyrinth, eating is often conflated with sexuality in fairy tale films. Rich, extravagantly laid tables like the one in La Belle et la bête are seen in many of the films referenced in this study, most notably Legend, Mirrormask, and Pan's Labyrinth. In each of these films, the rich banquet table is linked to a scene involving a tempting offer.

In Pan's Labyrinth, construction of gender and sexual identity is communicated primarily through the idea of the nuclear family, concerning itself largely with filial relationships, but also those between siblings. These relationships are not limited to blood-relationships, but explore questions of identity regarding fatherhood, motherhood, sisterhood and brotherhood. This exploration is advanced by the opposition of and the three female leads: Ofelia; her mother, and Vidal's housekeeper Mercedes, with Captain Vidal, who embodies a monstrous masculinity of machismo and patriarchy. Both explicit sex acts (present in either pornographic or erotic art) and fairy tale romance are conspicuously absent. The gender relations are as complex as they are diverse.

Ofelia's mother represents the feminine as submissive under the tyrannical rule of Vidal's monstrous masculinity. She repeatedly asks Ofelia to refer to Vidal as "father," and states that her submission to Vidal's intensely and overtly patriarchal rule was necessary for their survival. When Ofelia asks her why she remarried, her mother tells her that she "was alone too long," to which Ofelia replies innocently, "I'm with you. You weren't alone." Her mother then adds, "When you're older, you'll understand." Ofelia's mother is unarguably the woman trapped in the tower who prefers *not* to be rescued, the impotent woman who "is unable to act independently or self-assertively" and who "binds herself to the father and then to the prince [and] restricts her amibitions to hearth and nursery" (McGlathery 14). However, while she prefers a "familiar slavery to the terrifying uncertainty of the burden of liberty" (Warner 267), she is still a mother, whose "human care and human

warmth that was once present continues to have an invisible effect" despite the desperation of Ofelia's orphaned situation, wherein the "immediate human surroundings forsake … or torment" (Lüthi 60). Her motivations are ultimately for the safety of her daughter, however marred they are by her deals with the devil Vidal. Interestingly, she unwittingly serves the same purpose as Cinderella's dead mother and Lüthi's "third helping power" (60) when her medicinal tincture, rendered superfluous by her demise, provides the poison which enables Ofelia to escape with her brother near the film's end.

Ofelia's mother is contrasted with Mercedes, the head of Vidal's household staff, who bears a strong physical resemblance to Ofelia's mother. Where Ofelia's mother consistently capitulates to Vidal's every whim, Mercedes only presents the illusion of subservience, all the while plotting in tandem with the rebel forces hiding in the hills above the Mill. In many ways, she is Ophelia matured; she too has made the same sacrifice Ofelia will ultimately make at the film's climax—she has foregone the possibility of sexual union with a man in marriage to support her brother, who is part of the rebellion. In a twist of dark irony all of Mercedes' sacrifices still place her in the role of surrogate mother, first when Ofelia's birth mother dies, then again at the end of the film, when she ostensibly becomes the adoptive mother of Ofelia's orphaned brother.

Yet it is ultimately Ofelia who focalizes the feminine polarity in opposition to the Captain's masculinity. Although Ofelia is never presented in an overtly sexualized manner, she is certainly at the door to sexual awakening, a liminal adolescent, having

arrived at an age where her mother, commenting on Ofelia's love of fairy tales, judges her daughter to be "a bit too old to be filling [her] head with such nonsense." This is not the fully awakened sexuality of Lily in Legend, or the rampant and uncontrolled lust of Laura Palmer in Twin Peaks, but rather the whisper of potentials to which Ofelia has not yet reached.[27]

Ofelia stands at the threshold of her sexuality, and the film deftly explores the nuances of female identity formation and growing up and awakening to one's sexuality in a manner subtle to oversexed North American audiences. In addition to the sort of visual shorthand Krzywinska spoke of, the sexuality in Pan's Labyrinth is implied utilizing even more subtle shorthand, i.e. tropes of magic. Magical creatures and settings metonymically replace sex acts and their consequences. Ofelia's entrance into the colossal fig tree inhabited by the giant toad presents a subtle sexual imagery, the first example of this magical metonymy. The entrance to the tree is shaped like a vaginal opening with its curved branches resembling fallopian tubes,[28] a resemblance

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[27] Among the finer examples of films which deal with this fairy tale sexuality is Ridley Scott's Legend. Although the original theatrical version dealt with the issue of gender and sexuality in the temptation of Princess Lily by the Lord of Darkness, the director's cut includes a scene between Jack and Lily early in the film suffused with a sort of innocent innuendo that hints at awakening sexuality. It is Lily's virginal state that allows her to entice a unicorn, to betray Jack's trust without losing his love. Later, it is this same awakening sexuality which allows her to play coy with her captor, the Lord of Darkness, and lull him into her confidence. Where Legend portrays the positive side of fairy tale sexuality, Twin Peaks deals with its dark side, namely incest and child abuse, frequent narrative elements in both traditional and revisionist fairy tales. Tatar has stated that "the nuclear family furnishes the fairy tale's main cast of characters just as the family constitutes its most common subject" (10). Laura Palmer may have been simply a Sleeping Beauty in the first episodes of the dark and quirky television series, but when her rapist and murderer was revealed to have been her father, Leland Palmer, the story took on greater resemblance to "Donkeyskin."

[28] This shape is also manifested initially in the blood-red tendrils creeping across the page of the book given to Ofelia by the faun to guide her through her tasks. This occurs immediately prior to Ofelia's mother's collapse due to a complication in the pregnancy, visualized by copious amounts of blood running from between her legs. The connection between the Tree and feminine sexuality is overt, and intentional, on Del Toro's part.

which Del Toro himself points out in the film's commentary. The tree's sickened state mirrors her pregnant mother's fragile condition. A comic book on the DVD for Pan's Labyrinth illustrates the frog's entrance into the tree through this opening: it is "baited by a legion of pill bugs" and consequently kills the tree through its "insatiable appetite for roots." The images are symbolic markers for the sexual union between Ofelia's mother and Vidal. Vidal is the giant toad, who has entered the tree out of lustful appetites, consequently poisoning it to the point where it is now dying. The tree was once a shelter for the magical creatures of the forest, of which Ofelia is one. Although Ofelia's tasks are intended to be trials to secure her return to her Faerie kingdom, it is also clear throughout the film that these adventures serve as escapes from the harsh realities of her actual life.

When Ofelia finally arrives at her goal and confronts the frog, she asks it if it isn't ashamed at how it grows fat while the tree dies. This can be interpreted as a reference to the unborn baby brother who threatens the mother's health and safety, but it is also possible that the Toad represents the invasive sex act by Captain Vidal, the ultimate source of the life-threatening pregnancy. This is all the more likely given how all the monsters in the film metonymically stand in for Vidal within Ofelia's fantasy world, and as Marina Warner has noted, "in myth and fairy tale, the metaphor of devouring often stands in for sex" (259). Vidal is a more subtle Bluebeard—while he does not actively cannibalize Ofelia's mother, his obsession with a male progeny is effectively her undoing. The entire narrative of Pan's Labyrinth is an extended exploration of this equation of consuming, copulation, and conception:

> But consumption does not end with disciplinary measures in the nursery, or with sexual contact: the woman's fears do not focus on the act itself, but on its consequences, which are often spoken of in images of eating: the woman's body, especially pregnant is particularly delicious … for the greedy villains of fairy tale relish babies: their appetite first aims at women, but with an ulterior motive of devouring their offspring. This cannibal motif conveys a threefold incorporation: sexual union, by which a form of reciprocal devouring takes place; pregnancy, by which the womb encloses the growing child; and paternity, which takes over the infant after birth in one way or another." (Warner 260)

Captain Vidal is Del Toro's gender reversal of the wicked step mother. While in many traditional fairy tales "the good mother dies at the beginning of the story" only to be "supplanted by a monster" (Warner 201), the good father, "the object of childhood affection" (McGlathery 79), is dead, leaving the beast father to fill the void. From his first moment onscreen Vidal expresses an authoritarian patriarchal presence, exuding a classic machismo partnered with the harsh male violence expressed with multiple visual cues: his immaculate fascist military uniform and a damaged pocket watch, allegedly rescued from the field of battle where Vidal's dying father smashed it, so his son would know the hour of his violent death in combat. Vidal tells his officers that to die in battle is the only real way for a man to die, as he storms confidently into a hail of rebel bullets. His blind confidence that his unborn child is a son bespeaks his utter patriarchy; when the doctor asks how Vidal can be so

certain that the unborn child is a boy, Vidal places a ban on further discussion or inquiry by replying, "Don't fuck with me." Had it been born female, it seems certain the child would have been cast off, as Ofelia is later in the film. This is clear from Vidal's response to the doctor's remonstration that Vidal's wife "should not have traveled at such a late stage of pregnancy" to which he responds, "A son should be born wherever his father is." His obsession with producing a son is nearly thwarted by his own unrestrained violence when he kills the doctor for assisting a tortured prisoner to die, requiring a troop paramedic to preside over the delivery, ostensibly resulting in his wife's death. This obsession with a male progeny is the true motivation for Vidal's sexual union with Ofelia's mother: his appetite is for food and consumption, rather than for sexual contact. Ofelia's mother is simply another object to devour, like the Tree; once she is used as a vessel for Vidal's son, she is no longer of use. When it becomes clear that the delivery has gone mortally wrong, Vidal urges the field medic overseeing the birth to save the child at the expense of the mother's life.

The Pale man is another symbol of the consuming aspect of Vidal's nature; this sick, albino creature presides over a rich, bountiful feast, but eats only the blood of innocents. Although the bounty of food has a sexual undertone regarding Ofelia, for the Pale Man it is an overtone, a symbol of gluttony. Del Toro notes in the film's commentary that the geometry of the Pale Man's dining room is the same as that of Vidal's: a long rectangle with a chimney at the back and the monster at the head of the table, exhibiting a visual accomplishment of the fairy tale's "delight in repetition"

(Lüthi 53). Likewise, Vidal eats well, but his provision is at the cost of the people he is supposed to be protecting and providing for. Like the Pale Man, Vidal also dines on the blood of innocents. He cuts their rations, supposedly to hurt the rebels, but eats very well himself; in many scenes he savors his hoarded tobacco with almost sexual ecstasy; but this is not a man with sexual appetites. It is true that he has copulated with Ofelia's mother, but he is more akin to the Grimm Brothers' Big Bad Wolf, who wishes to eat Little Red Riding Hood than the wolf of "The Story of Grandmother" who invites her to bed. Vidal is the sort of wolf McGlathery argues for, one who is neither "a prospective suitor, nor even clearly a seducer of maidens as one usually thinks of the matter. His lust for Red Riding Hood's body is portrayed as gluttony, pure and simple" (57). The conflation of consumption, of food, tobacco and drink as Vidal's passion throughout the film underscores this idea; he enjoys the finer things in life, but a woman's body is clearly not one of them. He is a predator who *eats* his prey; his first thought is to torture Mercedes, not to rape her, as many screen villains are wont to do. This obsession with gluttonous consumption proves Vidal's undoing; in a wonderful piece of foreshadowing, Ofelia tricks the Toad into eating the stones, which will cause its demise, by disguising them as the pill bugs the monster lives on.[29]

Ofelia's propensity for disobedience, as well as her blooming sexuality is further hinted at in the temptation at the table in the lair of the Pale Man (which the DVD comic describes as "the One who gorged on excess"); it is reminiscent of Lily's

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[29] Near the end of the film, Ofelia renders Captain Vidal nearly unconscious by putting her deceased mother's medication into his liquor glass, tricking him into consuming it.

temptation at Darkness's table in Ridley Scott's Legend. The foods are rich and sumptuous; it is not meager fare. Red is the dominant color on the table, the color of desire, the dark red which "warns, holds back and awakens vigilance and ultimately anxiety" simultaneously forbidding access to the "the taboo on sexual drive, libido and the sexual instincts" (Chevalier & Gheerbrant 792). Throughout the film, color is utilized to convey narrative concepts. Warm colors are used for the magical kingdom. As was mentioned earlier, magic stands in for sex acts and their consequences, as the "magical" color of red obviously does in this scene, calling up a host of sexual connotations:

> Blood is red, the womb is red, the vulva is red, especially when stimulated.... Above all, sex is red, as in Eve's apple, a virgin's "cherry," Persephone's pomengranate or the Devil's cloak, the red-light district, red shoes, red satin boxes shaped like hearts and filled with candies to be licked on Valentine's Day or a *Scarlet letter* A for adultery, embroidered in gold on a Puritan gown. (Gould 10)

As Ofelia turns from her task of retrieving the dagger, she stops to admire this crimson bounty, and her eyes come to rest upon a platter covered in plump, juicy grapes. Despite the Faun's prohibition to touch nothing on the table, in the tradition of the temptation in the Garden of Eden or that of Persephone, Ofelia takes a grape and eats it,[30] enjoying its taste, an expression of rapture on her face as she does so. Like many literary fruits, the grape stands in as an expression of potential sexual desire ready to come into bloom in Ofelia's preadolescent body.

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[30] This is reminiscent of the red berries eaten by the heroine of Valerie and Her Week of Wonders.

Before entering the womb-like cavern beneath the dying tree, Ofelia strips down to her undergarments in an attempt to protect the beautiful party dress her mother has presented to her as a gift that morning. This party dress represents her mother's submission to Captain Vidal's patriarchal rule, and her desire that Ofelia submit also. "From birth a little girl is required to respond constantly to demands from outside that she should fit into a certain pattern. She must be pretty, well-dressed, quiet, well-behaved: in two words decoratively unobtrusive" (Waelti-Walters 5). Ofelia's rejection of the party dress is a rejection of her mother's submissive state as well as Vidal's oppressive governance, a common trait of the contemporary fairy tale heroine. While traditional fairy tales, especially Perrault's, strove to teach a young lady how to fit into society, contemporary fairy tales often seek to teach the reader or viewer how to break out of society's mold. The problem of patriarchy is often the subject of feminist critique of the fairy tale, as in Waelti-Walter's Fairy Tales and the Female Imagination where she argues that fairy tales, the classic princess stories so beloved of Disney in particular, "do not help little girls to achieve autonomy in the way they help boys. On the contrary they hold girls back" (7). In Sue Short's Misfit Sisters, the author argues that female coming-of-age narratives have been severely neglected in popular culture and its criticism, citing the recent example of George Lucas' original Star Wars trilogy as an example; while Princess Leia is hero Luke Skywalker's twin sister, she is denied "equivalent claim to Luke's destiny" despite their shared parentage:

> She shows no propensity towards using the "Force" and even seems to diminish in her assertiveness as the trilogy develops. Indeed, by the last installment, Leia is reduced to the role of a helpless female waiting to be saved—the very cliché the first film seemed to confront in her acerbic humour and authoritative manner. (5)

Ofelia, by contrast, is consistently disobedient, an aspect of her character which will be explored further in the chapter on the Meritorious Individual. For now, it will suffice to say that her defiance of Vidal's patriarchy constitutes a dialogue with current feminist scholarship on fairy tales which decry the use of sleeping princesses as role models for young women. This is mirrored in contemporary works, such as Holly Black's Tithe, whose heroine is characterized by her blatant and repeated defiance of all authority figures, which in this case are all females, but authoritative nonetheless. Consider also Buffy Summers, the teenage vampire slayer who skips school, disobeys her mother, and openly defies the patriarchal rule of principals Snyder, Bob Flutie, and Robin Wood in turn. These female figures are the legacy of writers such as Angela Carter, whose heroines are women who run with the wolves, not away from them.

Ofelia's disobedience ultimately places her in the role of mother-protector to her half-brother. While she is premature physically to be in this maternal role, her stalwart defiance of the patriarchy of Captain Vidal requires her to step into this role of necessity. It also further underscores that Ofelia will never have the opportunity to give birth to children of her own. However, the fact that Ofelia has not reached

adolescence does not diminish her presence as a gendered individual in Pan's Labyrinth. Indeed, although she retains a definite child-like innocence, Ofelia emerges as the most complete female in the film, a combination of the maternal, care-giving mother she loses, as well as the defiant, rebellious warrior-woman which Mercedes embodies. The film provides an excellent example of sexual awakening and formation which is concerned with more than sexual desire. Ofelia's awakening does not find her meeting a boy amongst the rebels, or engaging in a passionate tryst, but rather adopting roles which define the feminine in far more meaningful ways.

Chapter 05: The Politics of Good and Evil

Politically Incorrect In Faerie

The concept of the conflict of good and evil has fallen out of vogue in our postmodern society. The dichotomy of good triumphing over absolute evil, usually by violent means, seems to be perceived as an outdated mentality, if the film versions of Beowulf are any indication. In more than half of the cinematic adaptations of the epic poem, Grendel, the monster of Beowulf, has been endowed with a sympathetic aspect rather than being "primarily an ogre, a physical monster, whose main function is hostility to humanity" (Tolkien, Beowulf 38). This and the next chapter form a logical and thematic continuity: both stand alone as individual elements, yet are inextricably linked by the concepts of hero and villain. The American Film Institute defines a hero as "a character(s) who prevails in extreme circumstances and dramatizes a sense of morality, courage and purpose" contrasted with the villain, who is "a character(s) whose wickedness of mind, selfishness of character and will to power are sometimes masked by beauty and nobility, while others may rage unmasked. They can be horribly evil or grandiosely funny, but are ultimately tragic" (qtd. in Rankin 14). A hero is defined by a "sense of morality," a morality that stands in opposition to the horrible evil of the villain. In direct contravention of current attitudes, the fairy tale tradition falls firmly in the politically incorrect arena of demarcating a struggle between the poles we are remiss to call anything but good and evil.

A reticence toward clear-cut good and evil polarities in favor of a more ambiguous morality is demonstrated in the article "The Radical Morality of Rats,

Fairies, Wizards and Ogres," where Jack Zipes boldly states that "[t]here is nothing wrong with the black and white morality of the Harry Potter novels, except to say that there is always something wrong when the world is painted so conventionally black and white" (216). By contrast, he esteems Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials trilogy, stating that in these, "[d]arkness is exposed for what it is—the perversity of malignant forces serving a divine Authority that warps the souls and minds of people who worship it … Pullman frankly critiques organized religion and governmental institutions that foster power politics and give shape to the nature of evil in the contemporary world" (218).

The singular villain threatening Pullman's fictional universe of myriad worlds is the "God of the Church, the one they call the Authority…" (1997: 45). Pullman could have chosen to keep the Authority disconnected from actual faith practices, but the very clear statement that the "Christian religion is a very powerful and convincing mistake" (2000: 441) leave no question as to the target of Pullman's invective. What begins as a mere element of the narrative in The Golden Compass expands to become the tale's prime mover by The Amber Spyglass. By the third book entire chapters are built around lengthy metaphysical and moral expositions of the Authority and its forces, the Church. Although Pullman excels at writing deep, multifaceted characters such as Mrs. Coulter, whom readers alternately love or hate depending on which chapter they are reading, Pullman's depiction of the Church in Lyra's world is decidedly uniform, for "every church is the same" (1997: 50), despite Mary Malone's estimation that "people are too complicated to have simple labels" (2000: 447). Mrs.

Coulter's description of them as "a body of men with a feverish obsession with sexuality" (326) coupled with her earlier estimation that "[k]illing is not difficult for them…" (205) encompasses the caricature Pullman paints of the religious authority in Lyra's world.

In preferring Pullman over Potter, Zipes has merely traded one moral polemic for another. He has esteemed an ostensibly liberal moral perspective over one he deems conservative, implying that one is more complex than the other. There are fundamentalists in every existing ideological camp, who adhere to what they understand to be the tenets of their ideology unswervingly. Fundamentalism parading as liberalism is still fundamentalism. Stating that Pullman's works expose "'truths' about our society and our selves," and "in keeping the world open for children through … poetic words and imaginative vision … provides their ultimate defense and written testimony to the ways they might cope with the evil in their lives" (220) is entirely a value judgment. Others have argued that both the Potter books and the Narnia Chronicles expose truths about society and the individual as well.

In the same article, Zipes also valorizes the writing of Francesca Lia Block, who he claims "seeks to defend children or to depict their desperate lives as candidly as possible to reveal how children are victimized in our so-called civilization process" (220). These candid depictions are more caricatures of extreme issues facing modern teens, a "grocery list" comprised of the sort of topics sensational talk shows gravitate towards: "homosexuality, drugs, child abuse, racism, anti-Semitism, commercial exploitation of the young, and cults" (221). Zipes quotes critic Polly Shulman as

stating that Block's youthful heroes and heroines "rarely spend much time in school and they're too busy singing in rock bands, surfing, having babies out of wedlock, communing with ghosts, taking photographs, driving around Los Angeles in vintage convertibles, and living happily ever after to bother with their homework" (221). This may be a candid depiction of certain teenagers, but it hardly can be accounted as comprehensive. I am not suggesting that Block's works should not be read. My argument is simply that just because Block allows her youthful characters to engage in any sort of experimentation they choose (sexual, substance and spiritual at various points throughout the novels), it does not guarantee that the complex subjects of teen pregnancy, drug use, or spiritual seeking have been dealt with in an in-depth manner. Block makes as explicit a moral statement as Rowling, albeit a radically different one.

Zipes states that "[s]tory…must take a moral stance against moral stances" (231). However, Zipes himself takes a moral stance only against *certain* moral stances, favoring the rationalistic atheism of Pullman and Block's New Age laissez-faire morality in which anything goes for the allegedly black and white morality of the Potter universe. All narratives take a moral stance: some in a straightforward fashion, some more ambivalently. All narratives deal with concepts of good and evil at some level, or as Jerome Bruner puts it, "[t]o tell a story is inescapably to take a moral stance, even if it is a moral stance against moral stances" (51). Concealing this polemic beneath a veneer of ethical license does not mean the author has dealt with the associated complexities. If Pullman was to adhere to Zipes' admonition that stories must question the moral stances of moral stances, then he should have

examined the possibility that not all organized religion produces hypocrites and power-brokers. It produces Gandhis and Mother Theresas as well. But this is a difficult thing to accomplish in a narrative which piecemeal takes only one snapshot, or perspective, or viewpoint. The challenge lies in assimilating each viewpoint and holding them in playful, dynamic tension. There is nothing necessarily simple about a morality drawn with a polemic of good and evil.

Kenneth Kidd has called for children's books which "actually reckon with the horrific world violence to which our nation handily contributes, and which challenge the masterplot of childhood innocence that has transformed our very understanding of citizenship" (140). Insofar as Kid is speaking of books which deal directly with actual atrocities, such as the Holocaust or 9/11, I would agree; but to expect the same for children's fairy stories is remiss. Real world morality may be ambiguous, but the morality of Faerie is not. Max Lüthi has observed that this is one of the hallmarks of the fairy tale's style; in the world of the fairy tale, "there is no 'if' and no 'perhaps'" (57). Lüthi conflates moral clarity with fairy tales' fondness for gold and silver among other "extremes and contrasts" such as "dreadful punishments and splendid rewards, giants and dwarfs, mangy skull and golden hair, good and evil, handsome and ugly, black and white…the fairy tale portrays a clearly and neatly fashioned world" (50-51). While revisionist fairy tales tend to portray a moral ambiguity, the folklore from which they are derived does not. There can be a tendency in adults to overthink the ramifications of the simplicity of such tales based upon an adult understanding of morality and ethics which children neither possess, nor are

necessarily capable of understanding. Consequently, one wonders at the necessity of arbitrarily introducing younger children to historical events such as the Holocaust or 9/11.

This is not to say that the distinction of good and evil must remain childish, conservative, or cartoonish. The chaos of the six o'clock news is often beyond any person's ability to process in its immensity, regardless of age, especially when a major trauma is displayed in bold and brilliant color. The week of the 9/11 attacks, the "darkest kiddie fiction on the shelves," Lemony Snicket's Series of Unfortunate Events, "topped children's bestseller lists" (Fowler B8). The stark tales of the Baudelaire orphans "like so many fine works for children, taps into and expresses the most painful psychological realities…the fear…that what is beloved and familiar will somehow, inexplicably, become strange and terrifying" (Moss 57). The Unfortunate Events books proved an appealing retreat from the *specifics* of the horror which children were seeing on their televisions and reading in the newspapers, but not from the horror itself. While I was working as a teaching assistant in an elementary school, a co-worker inquired what I supposed the attraction to the Unfortunate Events series was. I replied that it seemed very likely to me that children dealing with divorce, abuse, death, or any number of trauma were likely to find comfort in tales about other children who experience "unfortunate events," but neither lose hope nor give up. Books related directly to these harsh life issues are of more interest to parents than they are to children. The indirect nature of Unfortunate Events, which take place in a world that is familiar enough to be comprehended but distant enough to enchant as a

secondary world, provides a platform for everyday fears to be dealt with in a manner that is accessible without overwhelming.

It also should be understood that the ethics of fairy tales are not necessarily explicitly prescriptive. In his article "Should We Do What Buffy Would Do?" Jason Kawal examines the actions of Buffy Summers, Vampire Slayer, within the paradigm of virtue ethics, playing tongue-in-cheek upon the "What Would Jesus Do?" fad in evangelical Christianity. Kawal concludes that we ought not to ask the question "What would Buffy do?" given that we "do not have the abilities of a Slayer, her interests, her commitments, her relationships, and so on" (155). We do not live in a universe where there are Hellmouths under the school library, where vampires and werewolves and witches are commonplace, and even if we did, we are not physically equipped, nor fated by destiny to do battle with such creatures. What Kawal suggests philosophically is that we ought to ask what Buffy, Jesus, Buddha, or any other moral exemplar "would deem to be morally right for *us* to do in our situation" (159). Fairy tales and their successive modern progeny offer readers (or viewers) the opportunity to deal with real fears within their imaginations, helping them to form abstract reactions to possible sources of trauma. To impose the moral ambiguity of the real world upon the realm of Faerie is an ontological error. While it is difficult and sometimes dangerous to apply the labels of ultimate good or ultimate evil to actual groups or individuals, their presence within fairy tales is necessary.

Why the "Big Bad" Must Die

The conflict of good and evil in fairy tale film is about much more than the inclusion of ethical or moral elements. There must be overt images of active struggle between the moral poles of the film's narrative framework. Max Lüthi states that "one of the basic themes in our fairy tales is battle" (121), a phrase which is key to our discussion.

Chainani proposes that all postmodern revisions of fairy tales be approached by "focusing on the figure of the wicked woman and the revised account of her motivations. If we begin by evaluating the author's explanation for the villainess' downfall in the source tales, then we can position the heroine's self-realization in this context and determine what allows her to succeed" (213). Chainani has identified the necessity of obstacles to produce the realization of success. This may seem common sense, but watering down the villain in fairy tale adaptations for political correctness ignores the necessity of a thoroughly evil villain in these tales. Between the earliest versions of fairy tales and their current sanitized school-age descendants exists a gradient gulf, emanating from a dawn of impenetrable dark and culminating in a terminus of Ivory Snow-White. The victims of an overprotective industry of children's literature, fairy tales have been stripped of their darkest and most threatening elements, or transformed into complex morality tales to mirror current values. Maria Nikoljeva writes that the ambiguity in postmodern fantasy undermines the sense of security young readers derive from "clear cut distinction between good and evil" (147). This approach demands an adult sense of justice from a child unable

to engage in complex dilemmas where "it is not self-evident which choice is the right one..." (146).

Many of the discussions concerning this fairy tale distinctive gravitate around issues pertaining to children, the perceived primary audience of fairy tales; the present condition of the fairy tale "has sunk to the level of the children's playroom" (Lüthi 84). Given our discussion on sexuality and gender, it is clear that this perception is a slight misappropriation. Yet from a pedestrian perspective, the fairy tale remains inextricably linked to Disneyworld and children's bedtime stories, whatever Anne Rice's erotic revisions may have done to an esoteric demographic's understanding of Sleeping Beauty. Given this popular perception, our discussion concerning the struggle of good vs. evil will begin with the importance of crystalline moral divisions in fairy tales for children before moving on to the discussion of this polemic in fairy tale films aimed at adults.

To make fairy tales more suitable for young audiences, editors in Victorian England altered the tales, omitting events or elements they deemed too harsh (Windling 26). While many children's fairy tale collections include a version of Little Red Riding Hood "in which the huntsman comes to the rescue before the wolf pounces on the girl" (Windling 26), the Grimms' tale of Little Red Cap, describes the "dear little girl whom everyone loved" (Hallett and Karasek 9) being "gobbled up" (10) quite suddenly by the wolf in senior's clothes. The wolf eventually meets his demise following an abrupt caesarean section compounded by a lethal case of

massive gall stones courtesy of Little Red Cap, while in "another story" (11), Little Red Cap baits the wolf into death by drowning.

In some modern versions of Little Red Riding Hood, killing the wolf in a violent manner gets replaced with a hasty getaway. The adults who altered the wolf's fate from execution to evasion "perceived that version as less violent and less frightening, but children found it scarier because the threat of the wolf remains unresolved" (Richards 833). Rather than finding the gory or horrific details of how the heroes are devoured or the villain slain terrifying, children reported that they found "stories with no endings *as frightening*" (834, italics mine). This is illustrated wonderfully in an emotional scene in Mirrormask when the protagonist Helena and her father discuss her mother's impending surgery; Helena is angry because no one informed her of the surgery. Her father informs her that the silence was to keep Helena from worry, to which she replies, "I wasn't worried until you told me not to worry" (2005).

Some would decry this simple, albeit violent justice, where absolute good punishes absolute evil, where a wicked stepmother is "forced to step into the red hot shoes and dance till she fell to the floor dead" (Hallett and Karasek 67). However, to strip a fictional villain of their teeth is to downplay the "layers of menace" (Haase 370) in the real world; when a child discovers that we have removed the wolf's teeth, the game is up; simply by attempting to shelter the child reader from harm, we have portrayed "the world as a fearful place" (Richards 833). Bruno Bettelheim suggests that being exposed only to "the sunny side of things" limits a child's development,

"[nourishing] the mind only in a one-sided way" (272). Further, in denying a form of justice for evil, we are cursed to languish in this fearful place since the "anticipation of a better world" has been taken away (Haase 361).

> The witches, devils, and villains of the fairy tale are for children symbols of evil, and the child experiences through them the dangers of evil but also learns that evil can be conquered or perhaps even transformed." (Lüthi 1976: 114)

Hence the choice of the value-laden words of "good" and "evil." If a film is dealing primarily with the ambiguities and complexities of real-life morality and ethics, then it is likely not a fairy tale. And it is the direct result of the presence of evil which gives birth to the oft-criticized violence within literary fairy tales, and by extension, their best film adaptations.

There can be no anticipation of a better world if a darker world is not imagined, and in that imagining, defeated. To debate whether Hansel and Gretel are greedy little children for their consumption of "the house made of bread…and cake…and sparkling sugar" (Hallett and Karasek 141) would be pointless; what matters is that the "wicked witch, who waylaid children and…killed, cooked, and ate any child who fell into her hands" (141) is "burned miserably to death" (143). She is a witch—not a modern adherent to Wicca, but a mythic monster, "not a person, but a mere figure, a personification of evil…Hansel and Gretel, in conquering the witch, not only overcome an old woman but evil itself" (Lüthi 64). Likewise, while it can be an interesting foray into humor to see the wolf as victim as in Jon Scieszka and Lane

Smith's True Story of the Three Little Pigs, the wolf remains in our collective imaginations as a creature of darkness and terror.

But does this concept hold true for fairy tales targeted toward adults? Or is it only children who find the ambiguity of the undefeated monster disquieting? Further, what is the relevance of such an argument towards the assessment of the fairy tale film? These questions will be explored at length in the next section.

The Link Between Cinematic Fairy Tale and Horror

In Misfit Sisters: Screen Horror as Female Rites of Passage, Sue Short has posited that fairy tales have acted as a key influence upon the horror genre, "particularly teen horror," and those horror narratives "are best understood as updated fairy tales" (6). Michael Cohn's Snow White: A Tale of Terror markets itself as something of a horror film, with the DVD cover displaying Sigourney Weaver in full prosthetic makeup as a hideous crone. The Leprechaun horror movie franchise and its copycat Rumplestiltskin are exemplary of how fairy tale motifs are successful plot lines for straight to video B-movie horror, while the horror-based television series Buffy the Vampire Slayer frequently utilizes fairy tale motifs, albeit in a more intelligent way than the series chipper title would imply. Walter Rankin's Grimm Pictures: Fairy Tale Archetypes in Eight Horror and Suspense Films examines the relationship implied by the title by "specifically pairing a single Grimm Brothers fairy tale with a horror/suspense film" (9). These films are horror films which utilize fairy tale elements, but not fairy tale films *per se*. The key to whether or not a horror film can

rightly be considered a fairy tale film concerns the struggle between good and evil, focusing particularly on the outcome of this struggle. To borrow a term from Buffy the Vampire Slayer the "Big Bad" (be it wolf, witch, or whatever) must die.[31]

If ambiguity over the demise of the villain is maintained, then a sense of horror remains. This is a standard trope of the horror movie, utilized both for the utilitarian possibility of the money-making sequel, but also for the sense of dread such ambiguous endings produce. The audience feels a sense of relief when Rachel Keller, the heroine of The Ring (2002) seems to have assuaged the vengeance-driven ghost-child of Samara; the swell of music in a major key tells us that everything is going to be all right. This is a happily ever after moment, which is torn away from the audience when Rachel returns home to tell her son Aidan that all is well.

Aidan Keller: What happened to the girl?

Rachel Keller: Samara?

Aidan Keller: Is that her name?

Rachel Keller: Mm-hmm.

Aidan Keller: Is she still in the dark place?

Rachel Keller: No. We set her free…

Aidan Keller: You weren't supposed to help her. Don't you understand, Rachel? *[his nose starts bleeding]* She never sleeps.

The idea that a force of evil is ever present is one of the major themes in Legend (1985). The Lord of Darkness, holding onto the edge of an abyss by his claws, mocks

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[31] Every season of Buffy: the Vampire Slayer featured a primary villain, who opposed Buffy and her companions for the entire seasonal story arc. This villain was referred to as the "Big Bad," likely a reference to the "Big Bad Wolf" of "Little Red Riding Hood."

the hero, Jack: "You think you have won! What is light without dark? What are you without me? I am a part of you all. You can never defeat me. We are brothers, eternal!" Jack responds in typical Holywood hero fashion by striking out with a sword and sending the Lord of Darkness spiraling into the abyss. While the original United States theatrical version featured a final shot of the Lord of Darkness laughing before the credits rolled, the director's cut omits this shot. Ridley Scott states in the DVD commentary that "[o]f course [darkness] is eternal…wherever you've got dark you've got light," adding that the special effect shot of the Lord of Darkness splitting into bits of light was to imply the potential for his reconstitution at a later time. However, when Jack wakes the princess Lily from her magic sleep, he tells her, "It's over … you're safe now." Lily does remind us all that "so many terrible things happened" but the film ends on an upbeat note, with the sun shining once again. Darkness, although not obliterated, has been defeated. This may seem a matter of splitting hairs, but the fairy tale film does not deny the existence of evil, nor the possibility of a new manifestation of evil presenting itself. However, within the confines of the immediate narrative, the fairy tale resolves the struggle between good and evil with certainty. The final note of the horror film is that evil lives on, no matter how much we struggle against it. The final note of the fairy tale film is that good can and will continue to triumph over this ever-present evil. The difference is simply a matter of how the ending is framed.

A horror film with fairy tale elements remains primarily a horror film when there is an ambiguity about the *defeat* of evil, as is the case in the Leprechaun

franchise, where the first film ends with a police officer hearing the voice of the ostensibly defeated villain down a well, intoning, "I'll not rest 'till I have me gold. Curse this well that me soul shall dwell, 'till I find me magic that breaks the spell." The ending of Ginger Snaps resolves the lycanthropy of one sister, leaving the younger one bitten and the promise that the Big Bad Wolf will live on to star in a sequel. The ending is the key. Rankin states that the disturbing ending of Silence of the Lambs (which he conflates with the tale of Little Red Riding Hood), with Hannibal Lecter now at large, emphasizes the inevitability of evil in a "world without simple endings" (39). Many horror films end on similar notes, emphasizing the complex nature of real-world evil.

Fairy tales, on the other hand, are not concerned with ambiguously complex endings. Fairy tale endings are (at least on the surface) simple ones. Max Lüthi concluded that the fairy tale's ability to "attract and repel so forcefully" should lead the reader to "assume that it deals with fundamentals," with a world in which "[o]ne is challenged to take sides, explicitly or implicitly" (22). While fairy tales may have influenced and inspired modern horror film, it remains that in fairy tale films the struggle between good and evil must be resolved, no matter how dark the subject matter leading to that resolution may be.

Good vs. Evil in Pan's Labyrinth

As a director, Guillermo Del Toro is well suited to dealing with this aspect of fairy tale film; his previous filmography, without exception, are all films which deal with

the struggle between good and evil: from the more subtle and nuanced Devil's Backbone (2001) to the comic book morality of Hellboy (2004). He is also no stranger to the portrayal of horrific villains; Cronos (1993), Blade II (2002), and Mimic (1997) all belong in varying degrees to the genre of horror, specifically emphasizing and exploring the aspect of the genre devoted to monsters.[32] Having been part of the creative effort behind these varied creatures of onscreen horror provided Del Toro with a considerable set of tools for portraying evil in monstrous (as well as monstrously human) form in Pan's Labyrinth.

Captain Vidal, the wicked stepfather of Pan's Labyrinth, serves both as the real-world, real-life villain within the film's ontology of the WWII Spain, and also the cipher by which the monstrosities of the realm of faerie can best be understood;[33] he threatens not only the heroine but all the surrounding land. This has already been explored extensively in the chapter on gender and sexuality, in reference to Ofelia's first mission into the dying fig tree and her confrontation with the monstrous toad, as well as her descent into the lair of the Pale Man. All of these creatures can be seen as

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[32] Blade II is the second in a Marvel comics franchise based upon a comic book hero who is a hybrid of vampire and human with the ability to walk in full daylight and who hunts vampires. However, Del Toro's approach to the vampires in this installment of the franchise is one of the more original, as well as terribly monstrous, in the vampire tradition. The vampires in Blade II don't simply have blood hunger; they are like junkies addicted to crack, and their physiognomy is horrifically adapted to procuring this blood in a fast and often spectacularly gory manner. Cronos also works within the vampire genre, where the vampire is a parasite which attaches itself to a human host, trading youth and vigor for the host acquiring blood for it, reminiscent of the stepmother of "Snow White." The giant insect monsters of Mimic, true to the film's title, share a number of traits with fairy tale monsters: disguising themselves as humans to lure their victims and devour them.

[33] Del Toro reveals in the DVD commentary that it is actually the Faun who is the unseen mover behind the Pale Man (that he may even *be* the Pale Man) and the monstrous Toad, evidenced by Doug Jones' portraying both the Pale Man and the Faun, but also by the appearance at the end of the film of the two faeries the Pale Man devours. Nevertheless, regardless of whether or not this holds true within the context of the narrative alone, the connections between Vidal and these monstrosities as projections of him remains.

Vidal's avatars in Faerie. Much of their symbolism is linked to sexuality and gender, as I have noted, but what will be explored here is how Vidal and his doppelgangers perform the duty of "hyperbolic violence" (Worley 78). Their evil actions provide the fairy tale of Pan's Labyrinth the exterior clarity that Lüthi states is part of what makes the fairy tale recognizable. The monsters embody the demons inside the man by the most effective visual means available to the cinematic medium. Fairy tales externalize internal conflicts and dilemmas, utilizing battle imagery to portray these psychological realities (Lüthi 122). We are not given all the details of Vidal's motivating history; like Grendel, or the trolls of the Dragonslayer tale of Silberweiss, "the word 'monster' suffices" (50).

The connection between Vidal and the Pale Man is further noted through the metallic chiming noise heard when Ofelia wields the dagger she steals from the Pale Man's underworld lair, a sound which is heard again when Mercedes wields her kitchen knife against Vidal. The DVD comic book notes that the knife which Ofelia steals from the Pale Man's lair was the only weapon which could kill him, and when it is stolen and taken from his lair, he faded out of existence; it is the ultimate decision Ofelia faces concerning the dagger which results in Vidal's undoing as well. These are the more subtle links between the real world Vidal and the otherworld monsters,[34] but all share a grotesque violent aspect.

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[34] The subtle nature of these connections could lead to the conclusion that the fantasy world of Pan's Labyrinth exists only as a product of Ofelia's imagination. It could be argued that the intentional resemblance between the Pale Man's dining room and Vidal's is meant to imply that Ofelia has simply gone sneaking around the house she currently occupies. However there is no missing blade from Vidal's wicked tools of torture to support this. The links between the blades are not concrete, but implied. They are not signaling the audience to decipher the reality or lack thereof, but rather to make associations between the knives as symbols of the Captain's undoing.

All of the monsters in Pan's Labyrinth are blatantly evil, without remorse for their oppressive and violent actions. All of them act from unrestrained appetite: the frog devouring the tree, the Pale Man dining upon the blood of innocents (his skin hangs in flaps, implying that he had once been much larger), and Vidal sucking the vitality out of the people around him. The first two are monstrous in their physical aspect; the Pale Man is especially frightening as he pursues Ofelia down his subterranean corridors, hand stretched out as though in longing, pierced with stigmata from where his eye peers "the better to see you with" (Hallett and Karasek 10). Vidal by comparison is handsome and well-manicured, meticulously grooming himself each morning, never appearing in the presence of his subjects as anything less than the perfectly arrayed military man. His monstrosity is internal, although Mercedes' mutilation of his face renders it more external for the film's climactic scenes.

A window into this inner monstrosity is provided via two connections between Vidal and one of the villains from Hellboy, a clockwork man named Kroenen, who "[s]uffered from a masochistic compulsion commonly known as 'surgical addiction'," removing his eyelids, and upper and lower lip, as well as inserting a steel rod "into his pelvis to keep him upright." Kroenen is shown literally winding himself up, or making adjustments to his own clockwork innards. Del Toro has stated in the DVD commentary for Pan's Labyrinth that the baroque interior of Vidal's workroom is a visual representation of the inner workings of Vidal's mind, with its massive machine wheel in the background, echoing the inner workings of the

broken watch he continually tinkers with. Kroenen's masochistic self-surgery is mirrored in Vidal's love of surgical torture.

This is not to imply that fairy tales speak only to internal, psychological evils; as Lüthi states in regards to the motif of the battle with a dragon in fairy tales, "the battle with the dragon is not only a symbol for the struggle with the dark side of our unconscious … it is, of course a symbol for the struggle against evil in the world" (1976: 81). Vidal's external brutality, more than anything else in the film proves to be the most horrific, eclipsing any terror either the Monstrous Toad or Pale Man could conjure.[35] I had friends who avoided the movie simply based on verbal descriptions of scenes where Vidal bashes in a peasant's face with a bottle, or performs torture on a captured rebel, cutting through the tendons between each finger on the hand.[36] "You can either make it spectacle or dramatic," Del Toro says ("Commentary"). A cut on the cheek or on the temple has become commonplace enough in film that it doesn't even register for the average filmgoer. Mercedes slicing through Vidal's cheek is the sort of violence that "immediately elicits a reaction that is very empathic." Del Toro deliberately designed the hyperbolic violence of Pan's Labyrinth to be "off-putting, rather than spectacular … very harrowing … designed to have an emotional impact." The only time Del Toro utilizes violence for spectacle is in the scene where the Captain sews his bifurcated cheek back together. The shot employs the use of blue screen special effects together with prosthetic makeup effects so that the camera

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[35] Vidal as the most terrifying monster in Pan's Labyrinth supports Bettelheim's contention that "the source of much that goes wrong in life is due to our very own natures" (272).

[36] This second atrocity is performed offscreen; the audience only sees the result of Vidal's labors.

never turns away from the spectacle of the Captain driving in the needle and pulling it through, over and over. Del Toro states that he did this so that the audience would understand what a relentless monster Vidal is, that like the Big Bad Wolf (or the Terminator) he will not stop until he is killed. This was necessary to make Ofelia's fear at the end of the film believable; she has faced other monsters, why should she fear this mere man? Because he has been hyperbolized as more than man; he is a caricature, the "man's man," who, after burning his open wound with alcohol, merely pours himself another drink.

If the Big Bad Wolf must die, so too must Captain Vidal. In describing the Captain's defeat and demise, one could ascertain the veracity of the fourth element of fairy tale films by opposite process, exploring how in fairy tales the villains (the individuals who *lack* merit) never win. While the Captain is an imposing onscreen threat, there is no question as to the ultimate outcome. Vidal succumbs to numerous losses and failures along the way to the climax of the film: his inability to usurp the place of Ofelia's dead father; the rebels' sabotage of a train and the consequent theft of medical supplies from the Captain's storerooms; the broken watch, an heirloom which constantly reminds both viewer and Vidal that the world he inhabits does not run smoothly, and things will not work out in a neat and orderly fashion, no matter how much you tinker with the workings of both mechanism and life. Even when the Captain seems to gain a victory, it is followed by a progressively spiraling series of losses, a tailspin towards his eventual and inevitable destruction. He captures a rebel and tortures him, only to have the sympathetic Doctor administer a dose of medicine

which kills the prisoner before Vidal can extract vital information about the rebels. In a fury, he kills the Doctor, just as Ofelia's mother goes into labor with Vidal's son. Due to the lack of proper medical attention (the birth is presided over by a field medic) Vidal gains his much coveted son, but loses his wife in the birthing process. He then discovers Mercedes' treachery, but is wounded before he can torture her to replace the information the Doctor's action prevented him from attaining. And finally, at the moment where he wrests his son back from Ofelia, shooting her on the spot, he in turn has his son taken away from him before being killed in cold blood by the rebels. Both heroine and villain face challenges in Del Toro's tale, but the outcomes of these challenges are what identify them as protagonist and antagonist, as will be discussed at length in the following chapter.

Del Toro suggests that the monsters in Pan's Labyrinth are indicative of the mortal aspects of the human condition such as aging, decay, and darkness. He sees monsters as an "essential part of a fable" ("Commentary"). It is curious that in an era where Beowulf's Grendel, one of the oldest monsters in literature is consistently portrayed in recent film adaptations with his monstrosity stripped away,[37] Del Toro chooses to leave his monsters utterly monstrous. We are not given opportunity or reason to care about the Captain. Pan's Labyrinth is very clear in its polemic: those who are servants of Franco's Fascist Spain represent evil. Those who would oppose such evil are good, no matter what means they employ to resist, which brings us to our fourth element: the meritorious individual coming out victorious in the end.

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[37] The "stripping away of the monstrous" has been achieved by playing upon the audience's emotional sympathies in Zemeckis' Beowulf (2007) or by rendering him a subhuman as in McTiernan's Thirteenth Warrior (1999), or both, as in the case of Beowulf and Grendel (2005).

Chapter 06: The Ethics of Success

Squeaky Clean or Clever?

Having determined that there must be a clearly defined struggle between good and evil, or protagonist and antagonist, the way is cleared for the fourth element of the fairy tale film: the meritorious individual will rise in the world, whatever obstacles are encountered. By implication, obstacles are necessary for the meritorious individual's success, since requisite merits are rendered superfluous in the absence of obstacles: "The very notion of Trouble presupposes that Actions should fit Goals appropriately" (Bruner 50). The meritorious individual is the deserving hero/heroine, the one who triumphs by holding fast to a true or generous nature, one who suffers but does not waver as a result and in the end is rewarded. This motif abounds in fairy tales: "Cinderella receives compensation for being patient and humble; the goose-girl because she did her work without complaining and didn't reveal her secret; the golden virgin because she worked tirelessly and diligently for Frau Holle" (Bausinger 80). The black and white moral contrasts of the fairy tale are again employed. However unlikely it is that "heroes" and "heroines" exist in the complexity of a primary world, they abound in secondary worlds, where it is commonly accepted and *expected* that the hero will win in the end.

This element may seem redundant in light of the third element, but as has already been shown, there are films which contain fairy tale elements where the meritorious individual does *not* win out in the end, where the villain is left at large. The final episode of Twin Peaks provides an example, if we are to accept Lara

Plummer's conclusions of the series as a "fractured fairy-tale" (310). Special Agent Dale Cooper, the series' handsome prince, is the epitome of the meritorious individual. He is professional, immaculately dressed, seemingly impervious to carnal temptations (other than his gourmand-like appreciation for coffee and cherry pie), survives a bullet wound to the stomach, and solves the mystery of the murdered prom queen (the Sleeping Beauty) only to be overcome by the malevolent spirit which caused the murder; Cooper's ultimate fate is imprisonment in the mysterious black lodge (the witch's castle) while the malevolent spirit, inhabiting Cooper's body, is free to kill again.

We must not conflate the squeaky clean conservatism of a Dale Cooper with the concept of merit. The proposed morality within the fairy tale film's narrative framework may not be one we agree with; Jack's poverty drives him to climb the beanstalk and commit theft and then murder to gain riches—the end seems to justify the means in Faerie. Thomas Shippey, commenting on Propp's Morphology of the Folktale, states that "even actions are not significant in themselves, but only in their context" (4). Put another way, "[t]his moral component of the fairy tales does not mean that the proposed morals or norms are good" (Zipes, Why Fairy Tales Stick 131). In the film version of Angela Carter's The Company of Wolves, it could be argued that within the feminist framework Carter has created, Rosaleen's actions are meritorious. Throughout the film women are portrayed as helpless, sometimes willing, victims to male violence, relying upon male intervention for rescue. Unlike the red-hooded child upon whom she is based, Rosaleen is not content to simply kill

the wolf. In Carter's universe, a dead wolf is just one less predator. Carter refuses to let men dominate the canine world. Rather than killing her wolf, Rosaleen instead wounds it, but then sympathizes with its pain. When the villagers arrive to rescue Rosaleen, they find two wolves, one wearing Rosaleen's cross necklace. Rosaleen has ultimately become one of the predators which have pursued her throughout the film. Few parents would want their children to end up as Rosaleen does at the end of The Company of Wolves, yet *within the context of the film and its themes*, she clearly emerges as a triumphant heroine.

Implicit in this fourth element of fairy tale film is not only the idea that the hero or heroine emerges triumphant, but also that the villain receives his/her just reward. Evil *will* be punished. We might say that rather than being redundant, this element is the resolution the third element demands. When it is met, it points towards the narrative resolution a fairy tale film demands. However, there is more at stake than simply success; the nature of the path leading to that success is a key factor in the fourth element.

Deficiency and Detour

The hero of the fairy tale film is a flawed and usually weak hero. The flaws and weaknesses are manifold; fairy tale protagonists seem to lack everything heroes of other genres hold in abundance. Lüthi postulates that the fairy tale hero is a combination of deficiency and detour. Due to the hero's deficiency, the hero is forced to depend on "help from without, especially from otherworldly sources," and because

strength alone is not enough to achieve the hero's goal, the fairy tale hero is "one who makes detours," which, Lüthi states, "is shown more clearly where [the hero] ignores advice and disregards commandments or interdictions" (1984: 139). These detours "turn out to be good luck for the hero, for he gains in this manner progressively greater prizes … each detour brings the hero one step higher" (140). Unlike the robust warriors of the heroic epic, they do not have physical prowess; they often begin their adventure in a state of material impoverishment; they are often reluctant heroes, or at the very least, have not gone actively seeking the adventure which finds them.

The deficiency of the fairy tale hero or heroine is an important distinctive then, since it places the protagonist in a diminished position from which he or she may rise. Deficiency is often achieved by a lack of maturity in years and experience; many fairy tale heroes are children; further, they are often the "weaker sex," although this generally proves a misnomer in modern fairy tale film. Females may appear helpless, but rarely turn out to be so, another inversion from the heroic epic. In the tradition of Gerda's quest to free Kai from the Snow Queen, fairy tale film, especially recent works, portray the supposedly weaker sex as the rescuer, not rescued, as often as not.

The detours are also reminiscent of Joseph Campbell's heroic journey, which he calls the "Road of Trials" whereupon "[d]ragons have now to be slain and surprising barriers passed—again, again, and again" (109). All stories contain such roads, but it remains *how* the trials are visualized which distinguishes a fairy tale film from other genres. The challenges set before the fairy tale heroine are as hyperbolic

as all the other elements of a fairy tale. Characters in fairy tales do not simply get lost in a forest; they get lost in the Deep Dark Woods. They are not simply pursued by predatory animals; they are stalked by Big Bad Wolves. They do not venture in search of new horizons; they leave the comfort of home for the Wide World.

Deficiency is often the reason for the inclusion of magical or extraordinary assistance in the fairy tale film, most ably visualized in Jim Henson's Labyrinth. Jennifer Connelly plays Sarah, a pouting, self-absorbed teenage girl who is left by her father and stepmother to babysit her infant half-brother.[38] In a fit of pique, she carelessly makes a wish that the goblins would come and take the child away, which they do. Sarah is then confronted by the Goblin King, who challenges her to finish his labyrinth in thirteen hours, with the consequence of failure being her brother staying to live out his life amongst the goblins. The Goblin King's labyrinth serves as a clear exteriorization of detour, as Sarah is continually faced with challenges which delay, confound, and mislead her. In writing of Leonardo da Vinci's maze, Marcel Brion says that "the very essence of the maze is to crowd into the smallest possible space the most complicated system of paths and thus delay for as long as possible the traveller's arrival at the centre of which is his goal" (qtd. in Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 642). At one point, Sarah attempts to mark where she has already gone by drawing arrows on tile stones with lipstick. As soon as she steps out of site, a tiny humanoid figure pushes up from underneath the marked tile stone, turning it in a

[38] Interestingly, although the writing teams were completely different, both Labyrinth and Mirrormask were realized largely due to the efforts of Jim Henson's Creature Shop, and both share nearly identical plot lines with superficial differences of a self-absorbed adolescent girl being pulled into a secondary world where she is faced with a myriad number of challenges, tasks, and companions with shifting allegiances.

different direction once, another time flipping it over completely. Even when she is befriended by denizens of the Labyrinth, she is taken in directions she does not want to go. A well-meaning caterpillar tells her not to head down one of two paths, warning her sternly that she *never* wants to go "that way." Sarah thanks the Caterpillar and heads off down the other path, while the Caterpillar muses that if Sarah had gone the other way, she would have gone straight to the castle of the Goblin King, which unbeknownst to the benevolent Caterpillar, was Sarah's goal. When Sarah finally reaches her goal, her claim to victory is told in verse, reinforcing the detours she has faced along the way. "Through hardships untold and dangers unnumbered," Sarah intones, "I have fought my way here to the castle beyond the Goblin City to take back the child that you have stolen." Detours are therefore often doorways either real or suggested, liminal spaces for crossing over from one state to another; the hardships and dangers have been the path to Sarah's triumph, and as will be seen shortly, her metamorphosis.

As will be discussed further in the next chapter, deficiency is the beginning on the path to metamorphosis in fairy tales. As Brion states, "[t]he harder the journey, the more and the tougher the obstacles in his path, the more the initiate will be transformed and acquire a new self in the course of his voyage of initiation" (qtd. in Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 644). Sarah's initial adolescent tantrum, which results in her brother's abduction, where she frames herself as "practically a slave" to her step-mother, serves well to inform the audience that this girl has some growing up to do. When first confronted by the Goblin King, he chides her facetiously, admonishing her

to "play with her toys and costumes," which is all that Sarah seems to care about. Deficiency is not always simply a demarcation of absence though. One of Sarah's favorite responses to the detours she encounters is to exclaim, "It isn't fair!" which is in sharp contrast to the other line she repeats in response to adversarial encouragement to turn back, to give up: "I can't." Sarah's journey is not simply from the entrance of the labyrinth to the throne room of the Goblin King; it is a journey from childish fits of anger that declare all things unfair to the mature response to persevere, and to understand that life may not be fair: "But that's the way it is."

Both detour and deficiency are prerequisites for the supporting cast of the fairy tale film, the various helpers who come to assist the fairy tale hero in their quest, as well as the magic objects which they find along the way. Heroes in heroic epics need no help; Beowulf faces all his monsters alone and his thanes are superfluous. While Beowulf defeats Grendel without the aid of a magic weapon, fairy tale heroes are never so capable. Sarah is helpless from the moment she begins her quest, and assembles a motley assortment of colorful characters who themselves provide both detour and deficiency, but together, they are able to overcome all adversity to succeed in the quest. They provide foils to Sarah's adolescent foibles, helping her simultaneously to grow up and to find her way to the Goblin Castle. Both helpers and helping objects fulfill this role of filling in the gaps in the fairy tale hero's ability. "In the fairy tale, magic objects are never bequeathed; they are only important when they are used to perform a certain task" (Lüthi 1976: 45). This necessity of the fairy

helpers in fairy tale film is announced by Sarah at the end of the film, when she says, "every now and again in my life - for no reason at all - I need you. All of you."

Merit in Mischief

As has already been stated in brief, to be meritorious in a fairy tale film does not necessarily imply virtue, or a morality which is congruous with modern conventions of what constitutes normative social behavior. While Sarah is spoiled, she is not morally or ethically unconscionable as some fairy tale heroes and heroines are. Lily, the lead female character of Ridley Scott's Legend,[39] provides a model of the mischievous fairy tale heroine, while still representing the meritorious individual in her own right through her rebellious, headstrong manner (which ironically makes her a match for the Lord of Darkness' wiles).

Critics of the film might point toward the film's traditional adherence to a patriarchal boy-rescues-girl concept, yet Lily is the film's prime mover, despite the numerous action pieces Jack plays out his role in. Jack is always working in reaction to Lily's actions, which are motivated by a disobedience borne out of Lily's sense of mischief. By contrast, Jack's adherence to the Laws of the Forest seem to leave him bereft of anything but the will to set things right. Although he is not directly responsible for the death of the male unicorn, he accepts the mantle of champion to restore the severed unicorn horn and free the world from an eternity of darkness and cold. Jack's merit is a classically traditional one: he wants to do the right thing.

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[39] Worley derides Legend as a "mega-budget plane crash of a movie," stating that even the director's cut "fails to reveal an original imagination at work" (67-68). I would argue that Worley's criticisms are largely aesthetic in nature; despite his allegations that "the film doesn't know the difference between world-embracing myth and communal fairy tale" (67), Legend clearly contains strong fairy tale elements, notwithstanding the anachronistic contemporary slang of its "slapstick goblins" (67).

Unlike Lily, he lacks the creative thought that comes of a fiery and independent spirit. The exception to this lack of original thought is still linked to Lily, who demonstrated how light reflects off polished metal earlier in the film. Jack improvises on the memory of her demonstration to employ the placement of mirrors to permit sunlight to flood Darkness' kingdom.

It is Lily's precociousness that sets the film's primary narrative in motion. When Jack treats Lily to a forbidden glimpse of the sacred pair of unicorns, Lily challenges the boundary to leave them untouched. Her intentions are not malignant, however; the film has already informed us that only innocence can snare the unicorn, and Lily is proven innocent when one of the unicorns approaches her and allows her to stroke its forehead. It is this action which enables the minions of the Lord of Darkness, an action which both covers the world of Faerie in a complete and eternal winter, freezing mortals where they stand, but also sets in motion events which later lead to the Lord of Darkness' defeat. While it is Jack who is instrumental in dispatching the Lord of Darkness, it is the severed unicorn horn which serves as the weapon, combined with the elemental force of Light; Jack's prowess with sword and bow have no effect. Lily's deficiency is both vice and virtue; while her mischievous curiosity aids the Lord of Darkness, it is this rebellious nature which also thwarts him in his attempted seduction.

Unlike Sarah who succeeds largely due to the assistance of magical helpers accompanying her on her quest, Lily relies solely upon her wits and wiles[40]. In

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[40] That is not to say the film lacks the element of magical intervention. It is Jack, the more traditional hero of Legend, who succeeds through the aid of magical helpers.

Legend's temptation scene, Lily is transformed from virginal princess to Goth Queen; the plunging neckline of the dress Darkness gifts her with to woo her becomes his own undoing. This scene has an equivalent moment in Labyrinth, but Sarah is *tricked* into that moment by unwittingly eating a poisoned peach; Lily makes a conscious decision to become this dark woman, *embracing* the empty dress as it dances about the room. Once Lily ascertains that her sexuality is a weapon against Darkness (who is the kind of demon for whom "[s]ex is both their weapon and their weakness," (King, 1991:188), she utilizes her wiles, uncovered by the very thing Darkness gave her in the hopes of seducing her. This seduction allows Lily to wield the sacrificial dagger meant to slay the last unicorn; in one last act of willful resistance, Lily uses this dagger to free the Unicorn, though in the process she is wounded by Darkness and falls into a magical sleep. Jack's waking kiss undoes this magical slumber, but Lily has been no corpse-like Sleeping Beauty, no china doll under glass—while Jack often plays a role audiences are far too familiar with, Lily is a new kind of princess, one whose fierce independence of will is her defining merit.

Detours, Deficiency, and Disobedience in Pan's Labyrinth

Again, Pan's Labyrinth provides us with a blending of all the characteristics we have discussed in regards to the meritorious individual. Ofelia's deficiencies are, as they were for Sarah and Lily, both blessing and curse. She is a female child in a thoroughly patriarchal household, causing her to be underestimated and overlooked by the Captain. Only following her capture while escaping with Mercedes does the

Captain pay her any attention, and even then it is to assume that putting her under lock and key should be adequate. Yet it is precisely her size and social standing which also make her eminently vulnerable. There is no question in the audience's mind as she is pursued by the Captain near the close of the film that he will not hesitate to kill her, and there will be nothing she can do to stop him. In Vidal's world, she is feminine and weak, and therefore unnecessary.

The merit which Ophelia seems to possess in greatest quantity is her ability to disobey. While on the surface, this would seem to be a vice, in the world Del Toro has created, disobedience is the path to resistance. The director himself says that one of the major themes of the film is "choice and obedience," as evidenced by the setting in Facist post-Civil war Spain. Ophelia's strong willed response to her mother's continual requests to treat Vidal as her father are mirrored by the disobedience of Mercedes and Doctor Ferreiro through their fraternization with the rebels in the hills. She is the consummate fairy tale heroine, the one who "*transgresses boundaries*, since [she] violates interdictions, and especially since [she] opens forbidden doors" (141).

Ofelia's disobedience is apparent from the introductory narration: "One day, eluding her keepers, the princess escaped" from the underground fairy tale realm her father ruled. She resists her mother's attempts at refining her into a young lady; she continues to read fairy tales despite her mother's admonitions that she is too old for such stories, refuses to call the Captain "father" and sneaks out of bed in the middle of the night to follow a fairy guide. It is there that she enters the film's eponymous

labyrinth, which is visualized concretely on the floor of the well, and expressed figuratively in the series of challenges and tasks Ofelia performs in her quest to return to her Fairy father's underground kingdom. A perfectly obedient child could never accomplish what Ofelia does. When the Faun tells her to place a mandrake root bathed in milk and fed with blood beneath her mother's bed as a remedy for the pregnant woman's failing condition, Ofelia does so without question, though it is abundantly clear that her actions are in direct contravention of her mother's wishes to stop pursuing such fanciful ideas.

Further, the tasks become increasingly complex; there is nothing to tempt Ofelia in the toad's lair, except perhaps that the accomplishment of her task seems odious, given the filth she is forced to crawl through. Still, it seems that Ofelia finds it easier to bear hardship than to resist temptation, and the presence of the delectable and sumptuous table in the Pale Man's lair proves a far greater obstacle than the promise of a ruined dress in the first. And each one in turn requires greater heights of Ofelia's defining merit of disobedience. In going to the toad's lair she disobeys her mother, showing up for an important dinner with a ruined dress and in terrible need of a bath. When she places the mandrake root under her mother's bed she defies her mother *and* the Captain. When she eats the fruit in the lair of the Pale Man she disobeys the Faun, a willful action proving her able to endure her final act of defiance, which is to refuse to give her brother over to the Faun for what she suspects will be a human sacrifice. For all her disobedience, she is finally rewarded. Disobedience and rebellion are meritorious in Del Toro's fairy tale.

All of the tasks prepared for Ofelia require her to commit actions which in and of themselves seem dubious. She must *kill* the monstrous toad, *steal* from the Pale Man, *kidnap* her brother. These actions are not arbitrarily placed in the narrative to transform Ofelia into a "good little girl," but rather, as the Faun says, to determine whether or not her *self* is intact. As in Lüthi's concept of detours, these tasks are employed "to make progressive escalations visible…the tasks or battles become ever more difficult; the path leads to ever more dangerous witches, to ever more distant and more powerful heavenly bodies or winds, to ever wiser givers of advice, or to ever more beautiful princesses" (140). Ofelia's first trial in the roots of the dying tree with the monstrous toad is more unpleasant and distressing than life-threatening; there is never an implication that the massive amphibian will eat her. That task is challenging, but not deadly, while the theft of the Pale Man's dagger is filled with a greater sense of menace. The toad eats pill bugs; the Pale Man eats children. The escalation is clear, mounting tension so that the threat the Captain presents at the end of the film is not understated. Her resistance is ultimately always directed to the Captain, who provides a contrast to Ofelia: a high ranking officer in a Fascist military, the paragon of unthinking obedience.

Ofelia's resolute rebellion against the authority figures around her serves as a noteworthy example of what Thomas Shippey refers to as the "pliability" of contemporary fairy tales. Shippey relates feminist folklorists' attempts to trace the tradition of the various tales back to an original source, predating patriarchal

interference with the oral text. Shippy argues that "transparently patriarchal" though the tales may be,

> … once this is grasped they need be so no more: they can be rewritten with an entirely different, or inverted, orientation … the contemporary fairy tale is 'transparent, suggestive and above all pliable': that is what makes it a 'constested site.' The most straightforward way of engaging in the contest was to write new stories which would provide girl-children with more active and more positive models than Sleeping Beauty or Disney's domesticated Cinderella. (257-58)

And unlike the stories which Shippey criticizes as not only making a feminist point, but are "entirely point" at the expense of story (259), Pan's Labyrinth presents a thoroughly feminist little girl, one who will not accept her place in society, who challenges boundaries and established borders, even at the expense of her own life, within an engaging narrative which never forces itself to overt didacticism.

While the film lacks a Perrault-style ending which gives us the moral and meaning of the story, it does finish in the sense we expect a fairy tale film ought to, given our discussion in the previous chapter. This is to say, that everyone gets what they deserve. The meritorious individual is victorious, and her adversary, the individual who lacks the key merit (in this case disobedience to the Fascist regime), comes to the end of the story in failure, disgrace, and ultimate impotency.

Each receives their "just reward," as dictated by the tradition of the fairy tale. The villain cannot simply die, for the violence must be hyperbolic: "it is obvious that

the fairytale, alongside its portrayal of the transformation of harm into benefit, of 'bad' into 'good,' just as often and just as clearly portrays the final elimination of the doers of harm, often in the extreme form of annihilation" (Lüthi 165). The monstrous toad explodes; the Pale Man is left to starve in his lair; the Captain has his cheek sliced open and is later shot in the head, and the audience does not feel remorse. Mercedes' reply to Vidal's request that his son be told the time and place of his death is: "He will never even know your name." At the end, the Captain is not merely killed; he is obliterated.

Ofelia's ultimate fate is an inversion of Vidal's. Where he is brought to a final, resolute end, Ofelia is ushered into what appears to be the Greek *athanasia*, existence without end, or as is often said in fairy tales, "and she lived happily *ever after*," which is the core theme of the final element, metamorphosis.

Chapter 07: Metamorphosis and Transformation

Magical Metamorphosis

Most narratives require a change on the part of the lead character, but fairy tales are concerned with a more dramatic sort of change. In the sections of his article concerning "fear and departure," and "illness and death," Bausinger states that "transformation, not gradual change, is the way of the fairy tale" (78). In Spinning Straw Into Gold: What Fairy Tales Reveal About the Transformations in a Woman's Life, Joan Gould makes the distinction that "true transformation" is not external change, "a magic wand that turns a poor girl's rags to riches." Rather, it is an internal transformation involving pain and "rising (or falling) from one level of consciousness to the next, gaining a new sense of where we are in our lives and what must come next" (xvii). While this may serve the purposes of the self-help movement, or spiritual seekers, the transformations and metamorphoses in fairy tale films *are* executed by magic wand, or by crossing over a threshold from the primary world to the secondary world. To include the sort of transformation Gould is speaking of as an element of fairy tale film would be too encompassing, since almost all narratives involve journeys of personal "transformation." We must again refine what is meant by transformation and metamorphosis within the context of the fairy tale film. Marina Warner's catalogue of a variety of fairy tale metamorphoses helps to clarify:

> Shape-shifting is one of fairy-tale's dominant and characteristic wonders: hands are cut off, found and reattached, babies' throats are slit, but then are later restored to life, a rusty lamp turns into an all-powerful talisman, a

> humble pestle and mortar becomes the winged vehicle of the fairy enchantress Baba Yaga, the beggar changes into the powerful enchantress and the slattern in the filthy donkeyskin into a golden-haired princess. Moreso than the presence of fairies, the moral function, the imagined antiquity and oral anonymity of the ultimate source, and the happy ending … metamorphosis defines the fairy tale. (xv)

We are again speaking of the visual hyperbole which has greeted us at nearly every turn through this project. This hyperbolized reality is inherent in the "life writ large" approach of the television series Buffy the Vampire Slayer, set in the fictional town of Sunnydale where "high school is not just hell; it sits on top of a 'Hellmouth'":

> In Sunnydale one does not fear having a monster for a boyfriend; werewolves and vampires are date material. In Sunnydale the lunch lady really is trying to poison the cafeteria food and people really do kill to get on the cheerleading squad. From a philosophical and sociological perspective the literal use of such metaphors serve to represent the fears present among today's teens and young adults growing up in a post industrial world. Such metaphors taken to their literal extreme were the driving force behind many of the early episodes of BtVS. Here the "monster of the week" could stand in for themes like fear of relationship violence, feelings of low self-esteem, teenage lust and heartbreak, and giving in to strong social pressure." (Little 282-83)

Tanya Krzwinska has written about how teen werewolf films "mythologize the physical and mental transformations undergone by adolescent boys" (2006: 150), as well as girls, in such films as Ginger Snaps, whose tagline included a menstrual innuendo: "No wonder they call it the curse" (2001). In these films, the adolescent is a changeling whose body undergoes "accelerated metamorphosis"—this is not the reality of the adolescent change; it is a hyperbolized reality, communicating the lack of control young teens feel over the physically alterations they are experiencing. One young man who is infected with lycanthropy in Ginger Snaps displays the early stages of his metamorphosis with the requisite fanged teeth, but also with an onset of rampant acne. Ginger's entire metamorphosis from adolescent teen to monstrous werewolf is couched in imagery linked to menstruation, and her progressively spectacular metamorphoses are always linked to an instance of unbridled sexual hunger.

Such hyperbolized metamorphoses are almost always accomplished with the assistance of special effects. Prosthetic nails, teeth and in more recent years, foreheads have been the signals of lycanthropy since Lon Chaney Jr. first appeared on the silver screen as The Wolfman in 1941. Other transformations have become increasingly easy to represent onscreen as the technology of computer animation enables more miraculous metamorphoses than the often clumsy animatronic effects and latex prosthetics of the pre-CGI magical metamorphoses afforded. Yet even in post-CGI films, metamorphosis as an abrupt or radical process is underscored by how it is always ultimately a form of editing, or manipulating the medium of film. In

Mirrormask, Helena's metamorphosis from oneiric waif to dark princess is accomplished largely by film edits and varying camera angles. In Ginger Snaps, Ginger's final shape-shift into beast is accomplished by jumping between two different shots, the first of Ginger's sister and her friend driving a car, and the other of Ginger in the trunk of that car. With each strobe-like glimpse we are given of Ginger, she changes visibly. These films have been *cut* to underscore the rapidity of the metamorphosis.

The spatial extent of metamorphosis has also been empowered by this technological revolution. In Silent Hill, an empty and silent ghost town where grey ash falls from the sky, piling on the streets and buildings like snow, undergoes repeated transformations. At several points in the film, a palpable darkness descends, transforming the town from the appearance of an austere winter landscape to an ominous shadowy without any camera movement or editorial cut, an effect well outside the parameters of special effects before CGI. In one scene in a decrepit school washroom, the audience is witness to one of these transformations, illuminated by flashlight. Filth and mud drip down the walls, paint sloughs off like shed snakeskin, tiles fall to the floor, and the casings of the washroom stalls melt revealing the metal frames beneath. A dead man crawls out of one of the stalls as the walls become covered in sinew and flesh, upon which golden pustules form, bursting to spill black beetle-like insects.

Yet not all hyperbolized metamorphoses are communicated in film utilizing special effects. One of the most common visual shorthand for metamorphosis is to

employ adolescents as the protagonist. Bausinger states that fairy tales "depict ways of finding independence" (78), which references the idea of rites of passage, bringing us back to the distinctive of gender and sexuality. Most rites of passage involve the liminal phase of adolescence, that ambiguous time-between-times when one is no longer a child, but not yet an adult. This is why many of the heroes of these narratives are either on the verge of or passing through, or emerging from, adolescence. It is also likely a reason female protagonists dominate the field of fairy tales, since their journey into adolescence holds more visual cues of metamorphosis; the drops of blood in Valerie and her Week of Wonders signaling the onset of menstruation, her fascination with the fully grown breasts of the older women she sees frolicking in the river and her apparent self-inquiry by examination of her own flowering curves. It is easy to downplay the sexuality of a heroine in this stage of life, only to accentuate it later on. In both Legend and Mirrormask, the heroines are initially costumed in very chaste attire, replaced later by dark adornment with plunging necklines and bare arms underscoring what was previously hidden, accentuating the concept of adolescent transformation; Lily goes from demure princess dressed in white and gold to a vampy gothic queen in a low-cut dress as black as midnight, while Helena's white, asexual pajamas are replaced in a scene reminiscent of Lily's by a dress comprised of black velvet and leather, transforming her, in writer Neil Gaiman's words, "from girl to dark princess" ("Commentary" 2005).

Metamorphosis as a Means of Defeating Evil: the Eucatastrophe

Lüthi quotes Novalis as saying that great transformations might occur "if man began to love the evil in the world" (1976: 81). This is to say, transformation can occur, even for the villain of a tale; while this may seem to be in contravention of the conclusion in the chapter on good and evil that evil must be defeated, there is always the possibility that metamorphosis, not hyperbolic violence brings about the defeat. Again we encounter the difference between the horror and the fairy tale film. Silent Hill would easily fall within the category of fairy tale film save for its lack of ultimate metamorphosis. One of the major themes of the film is the relationships between women, specifically mothers and daughters. The heroine Rose, has taken her troubled daughter Sharon to the ghost town of Silent Hill in the hopes that she can find a solution to Sharon's dangerous somnambulism. Following an auto accident near the town, Rose finds herself in a nightmare version of Silent Hill, a phantasmagorical wonderland which turns out to be a reality constructed by the "fear and pain" of Alessa, a girl who had been burned by the townspeople of Silent Hill many years prior. Rose discovers in a conversation with "the dark part of Alessa" that her own child Sharon, is "what's left of [Alessa's] goodness," a manifestation outside the nightmare reality sent outside to protect the virtue in Alessa. Rose agrees to assist Alessa in her revenge, and in doing so, the dark part of Alessa merges with Sharon. Rather than resulting in a metamorphosis which heals the wrong done, Rose and Sharon remain locked within a grey, misty reality, with a question remaining in the audiences' mind about what exactly this fusion of the two entities has resulted in.

While she has achieved the goal of making her daughter whole again (she is now no longer only a good "fragment" of Alessa), Rose's act of love does not result in a transformation where good overcomes evil. There is ambiguity over whether or not the good has been absorbed by the dark, and horror is the result of metamorphoses which result from evil triumphing over good.

Metamorphosis in the fairy tale film must result in an unambiguous triumph of good over evil. Contrast Silent Hill's unresolved merging of light and shadow, with the climactic scene in Jim Henson's Dark Crystal. When the film's eponymous crystal is made whole by the restoration of a lost shard, the villainous, vulture-like Skeksis are harmoniously united with the gentle, hunchbacked Mystics. The consequent metamorphosis results in the return of a race of beings that had formerly split their essences in an attempt to rid themselves of the darkness within. It is clear that these beings are benevolent in nature, although they are no longer purely good. As was discussed in the chapter on Good and Evil, fairy tale film does not deny the ongoing problem of evil, but it is dedicated to the portrayal of the triumph of good over that evil. The means by which that triumph occurs is immaterial, so long as it has a *finality* to it. The Dark Crystal ends with an exterior view of the land around the former Skeksis' castle; where a blighted plateau once sat, a verdant and thriving bucolic landscape is now presented. The implication that good has triumphed over evil is clear.

This need for the evil to be defeated is linked to Tolkien's concept of Eucatastrophe, or the good catastrophe. John Davenport explains the state of consolation which results from the Eucatastrophe:

> By this Tolkien does not mean comforting words, but an answer to the question of whether our efforts, hardships and suffering have any point, any final significance … The kind of happy ending that marks genuine fairy stories, in which there is a miraculous reprieve in the midst of impending disaster, hints at an answer to this ultimate question … The poignant emotion Tolkien finds in this moment in a good fairy tale requires a tragic recognition of the evil and imperfection of our world, or even a Norse-like resignation to the fact that we cannot overcome it by our own power, yet the tale rises above this grief in a humanly impossible reprieve that is only made possible by divine grace ("by virtue of the absurd" as Kierkegaard would say). (209-11)

Tolkien's concept of Eucatastophe is another way of saying the "happily-ever-after ending" of the classic fairy tale, but it must be predicated by a struggle which results in a moment of pain and sorrow. The fairy tale metamorphosis is meaningless and arbitrary without the struggle between good and evil and the difficulties of the path that leads to the hero's/heroine's success. Metamorphosis also has religious connotations; it speaks of hope, and eschatological significance, even if that eschatology is personal, not global. However, real-life metamorphoses which lead to the cessation of evil are in short supply.

> Our world reflects many of the classic symptoms of the wasteland kingdom: famine, environmental damage to the natural world, economic uncertainty, rampant injustice, personal despair and alienation, and the threat of war and annihilation. Our "kingdoms" reflect the state of our collective souls, not just those of our leaders … The transformation of the kingdom depends upon all of us. (Pearson 2-3).

Again, however, Pearson's concept of transformation is a slow one complicated by the difficulties of real-world morality, ethics, and human ability and fallibility. Nevertheless, if we can agree with Neal King's estimation that Buffy the Vampire slayer possesses "a strong religious character" due to its "[s]tories of sacrifice and loss, invested with supernatural significance [which] give import to our communities and inspire in us selflessness and trust" (210), and agree that the "happily-ever-after" ending of fairy tales is synonymous with Tolkien's eucatastrophe, we can say that the transformational aspect of the fairy tale is a religious one. Davenport has provided us with the possibility of a godless eucatastrophe, one where divine grace is supplanted by Kierkegaard's "virtue of the absurd" (211). Goodenough cites "MacDonald's reverence for the Childlike" (338) and Wilde's "creed of the redemptive power of Imagination by deifying and embodying Art, likening self-realization to at-onement" (343). Regardless of whether the author is Christian or atheist, Lewis or Pullman, any sermonizing intent in the context of the fairy tale seems to result in what Goodenough calls a transcending of their initial *communally* referential meaning (338).

Metamorphoses in Pan's Labyrinth – A Pagan Saint's tale

Pan's Labyrinth provides us with a number of metamorphoses, culminating in the one final Eucatastrophic moment mentioned at the end of the previous chapter. Ofelia undergoes a number of transformative, liminal moments in Pan's Labyrinth. Her first onscreen appearance is in the midst of such a moment, transitioning from Ofelia's familiar life in the city to the unfamiliar surroundings of the countryside where Captain Vidal resides. Her relationship with her brother marks another metamorphosis. Ofelia's attitude toward her unborn brother is one of fear and suspicion. While her mother lies unconscious, Ofelia speaks to her *in utero* sibling, begging him, "Brother … little brother … You've made Mama very sick. I want to ask you one favor for when you come out, just one: don't hurt her." As was discussed in the chapter on gender and sexuality, the malevolent toad inside the withering tree is an embodiment of Ophelia's perception of Vidal's intrusive seed which has spawned the child that has sickened her mother. She offers him a placation: "Listen, if you do what I say, I'll make you a promise, I'll take you to my kingdom and I'll make you a prince." Yet when her mother dies in childbirth, Ofelia does not abandon her brother. In the tradition of so many brave sister figures who act as defenders for their brothers such as Gretel in "Hansel and Gretel," Kai in the "Snow Queen," and Lenchen in "The Juniper Tree" (McGlathery 30), she rises to the occasion to protect her half-brother and attempt to make good on her promise. She is transformed from jealous sibling to guardian angel, from sister to surrogate mother.

Ultimately, it is this metamorphosis from a self-seeking child to the guardian of her half-brother which results in the greatest transformation, and the one that is ultimately the sort of metamorphosis the fairy tale film is concerned with. At the end of the film, the faun has told Ofelia that her earlier transgression in the lair of the Pale Man will be forgiven if she follows his orders explicitly, to the letter. He tells her that it is her last chance to regain her kingdom. "Fetch your brother," he tells her, "and bring him to the labyrinth as quickly as you can." When Ofelia reaches the center of the labyrinth, the faun is waiting, the Pale Man's magical dagger in hand. He gives her the choice to allow him to sacrifice her brother or lose her kingdom forever. "The portal will only open if we offer the blood of an innocent," he says blamelessly, telling her it will be but a "pinprick." Ofelia refuses; the faun is enraged. "You would give up your sacred rights for this brat you barely know?"

His offer of the sacrificial blade is reminiscent of the Little Mermaid's sisters, who bring her the sea-witch's knife, a blade to shed the prince's blood and restore her mermaid form. Like Ofelia's brother, the prince has caused the mermaid humiliation and suffering; and yet she chooses to spare the prince's life, and doom herself. Likewise, Ofelia's reply seals her fate. "Yes, I would." The faun retreats; Vidal arrives, retrieves his son and shoots Ofelia point blank. She drops to the ground, her blood running down into the labyrinth. Inadvertently, her decision accomplishes the final task. It is the moment of sorrow, and a moment of apparent failure. Once again echoing "The Little Mermaid," Ofelia has gained her life by losing it. The little mermaid is transformed at the moment of her expected demise as sea-salt into a

sylph, a spirit of the air. "Poor little mermaid," the sylphs cry, "you've suffered and endured, raising yourself up to the world of the sylphs" (Andersen 86). Ofelia too, has suffered and endured, and at the moment of her apparent failure, succeeds. After all, the blood of an innocent has been shed, and so fulfilled the Faun's requirements. The portal opens. Eucatastrophe has been achieved.

Ofelia's impending metamorphosis is mirrored subtly throughout the film in the phases of the moon, which is growing to its fullness throughout the picture. As Del Toro states, "[it is] always changing; the moon is always transforming and becoming. It's never static." Since the film is "about a girl becoming a woman," Del Toro felt that the feminine symbol of the moon was the best symbol to connote the metamorphosis Ofeila undergoes. This is visualized in several ways; the actual moon in the night sky, moving through its phases, the moon birthmark on Ofelia's shoulder, and the symbols on the standing stone at the bottom of the spiral stairs in the Labyrinth. There are brief moments of sunlight throughout the film, but it is always indirect, filtering down through the thick trees. The majority of the film takes place in dark or evening settings, a fitting accompaniment to this lunar-based transformation. It is this association with the moon and a world of darkness that makes Ofelia's final metamorphosis all the more poignant.

As the portal opens, admitting Ofelia, the darkling world, azure-colored by the light of the moon, is engulfed by a flood of saffron and gold,[41] and Ofelia hears a

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[41] Del Toro comments that the golden color "starts contaminating the blue sets" beginning with Vidal's dining room; normally a cold, dark set, in the final moments of the film it is filled with the light of the fire. Then, the entire Mill burns to the ground, filling the dark world with the golden color of the otherworld, signaling an end to Vidal's reign. Carol S. Pearson, in her work Awakening the Heroes

strong, male voice bid her "arise, my daughter, come." Ofelia rises to her feet, bloodstained nightshift and dingy coat replaced with a scarlet silk jacket and a yellow dress adorned with flowers in bloom. On her feet are red shoes, the footwear of Dorothy, who chanted "there's no place like home" at the close of Wizard of Oz (1939). In a reversal of the Oz Technicolor transition to the desaturated monochromatic locale of Kansas, Ofelia has stepped from the cold cyanic reality of twentieth century Spain into a hyper-saturated paradise suffused in the colors of daylight, and of gold. "The final stage of the alchemical process—symbolized by royalty, gold, and the sun—signifies the successful ability to manifest a spiritual truth on the physical plane" (Pearson 45). The hall Ofelia enters at this final metamorphosis is clearly an "imperishable world" filled as it is with "gold and silver … glass and crystal" (Lüthi 45), an unmistakably Christian heaven despite the presence of the faun as an ostensibly somewhat pagan element, who has also undergone a final transformation; he is now young and vibrant, and all the fairy attendants, even the ones who perished, are present. Her mother and father sit upon two thrones, beckoning Ofelia to join them in the third, which sits empty. "Come here

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Within, makes the connection between transformation and alchemy. She states that "[t]he goal of changing lead into gold on the physical plane was always secondary, for genuine alchemists, to the greater spiritual goal of raising leaden consciousness to golden consciousness" (45). We are concerned with Faerie, where fairy tale alchemy is possible. These alchemists of the psyche who are more concerned with their consciousness than gold are again too ambiguous a subject matter for our purposes; as Lüthi states, the fairy tale is "fond of gold, silver, iron and crystal, if for no other reason than it prefers everything sold and clearly formed" (51). Gold is gold within the context of the story, whatever reading a Marxist, feminist or Jungian might give of it. As a result, alchemical transformation in fairy tale film is more immediate and concrete; there may be a process involved, but the moment of conversion from one state to another is radical, not incremental. One can interpret this sudden transformation as symbolic of inner transformation in a broad human context, but that is not how the event is to be portrayed in fairy tale film. Lead becomes gold, skeksis become mystics, teenage girls become werewolves, eternal winters give way in hours to spring's thaw. The medium alone makes this necessary; exterior visuals become shorthand for inner transformation.

with me," her mother says, "and sit by your father's side," a clear allusion to Christ's parables in Matthew 25,[42] as well as his own promise to his apostles that he was going to sit at his father's side once his work had been accomplished. Ofelia's sacrificial act is a Christ-act. In response, on both sides of this cathedral-like heavenly court a great "crowd of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1) stands and applauds Ofelia's bravery and resourcefulness.

Ofelia's ultimate metamorphosis echoes the saint's legend mixed in with the fairy tale, since the finale seems very much a "consolation, a testimony to the existence of a deeper meaning" (Lüthi 44). It is certainly the "utopian transformation and the desire for a better life" spoken of by Zipes (Stick 106), and the "literary representations of the spiritual precocity of dying children, like scenes of execution in John Foxe's Book of Martyrs, [which] shaped the enduring ideal of protestant heroism" (Goodenough 348).

Ofelia's metamorphosis is not the only one we are aware of at the end of the film. The Faun is also present at this heavenly assembly, stepping meekly from behind the throne of Ofelia's father. In strong contrast to his appearance at the beginning of the film, he is now robust and healthy looking, his movements smooth and agile. Del Toro reveals that in the first scene the Faun appears in, the intent was to make him look older, and "he gets younger and younger as the story progresses." When we first saw the Faun, his movements were jerky and palsied, (as Del Toro puts it in the DVD commentary, "more spastic"), he was covered in moss, having stood

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[42] Ofelia's mother's words echo those of Christ in the two parables; "Well done, good and faithful servant!" (Matthew 25:21) and "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34).

vigilant waiting for ages, and the voice actor uses more grit and gravel in his tone. His eyes are somewhat rheumy, he is "almost blind," his teeth are crooked, and there are leaves in his nearly white hair. The Faun is representative of the woods around the Labyrinth, tied to the Land in some way, implied when he tells Ofelia that he is "the mountain, the forest and the earth." The land has been under a curse, as was seen in the episode with the monstrous toad. The presence of the Captain and his troops as representatives of fascism have been a blight on the land, keeping the food from the people, oppressing them, and bringing a reign of darkness. As Ofelia's victory approaches, with each stage of her quest being fulfilled, the Faun becomes increasingly healthy. When we last see him atop the well with the sacrificial dagger, he is bereft of all his earlier deficiencies. The land is being healed. Ofelia's eucatastrophe does not only transform her, it transforms the world around her as well.

While none of the distinctive marks I have proposed in this essay can function alone to classify a film as part of the fairy tale genre, metamorphosis is the only one I would argue *must* be present, agreeing that "[t]ransformation is the key to the fairy tale" (Philip 40). Having said this, the element of metamorphosis must function harmoniously with the other four elements of the fairy tale film. The metamorphosis of fairy tale film is a product of wonder requiring special effects, as well characters and locations ambiguous and pliable enough to sustain metamorphosis. It bears on the protagonist and on the matters of his/her identity, gender and sexuality. It requires the struggle of good and evil to give its eucatastrophic aspect meaning, and of course, it cannot be a good catastrophe if the meritorious individual does not succeed.

Metamorphosis is the lynch-pin of the fairy tale film, the element in which all the other elements find the completion of their spiraling pattern. Like in a labyrinth, we have been marching along paths circuitous and winding, until we come at last to the center, the place of transformation. Here at the center our journey ends, and so it is time to leave Faerie.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to advance a conceptualization of the genre of fairy tale film as a tool for use in the broader context of both fairy tale and film scholarship. A number of primary film sources were employed to determine a thematic core which defines fairy tale films as a genre in its own right, as well as to connect the fairy tale film with the larger tradition of folklore and fairy tales. Pan's Labyrinth served as a case study of a fairy tale film which utilizes all five elements in a harmonious fashion.

Part of my intention was to examine the genre of the fairy tale film in its historical connection to oral folk tale and literary fairy tale and to establish the continuity of the tradition through the persistence of the thematic core and the examination of the status of the film medium in contemporary culture. The relationship between the medium of film and the virtual space of the Internet has given rise to a new orality which brings the fairy tale film (and film in general) full circle with the oral tradition of folklore. This new orality is propagated through online avenues of forums, chat rooms, fan fiction, fan films and personal websites, where fans of films critique, honor, lampoon, imitate and expand upon established film works. This interactive participation in the broader experiential context of film-going demonstrates that while film itself is a relatively fixed medium, the dissemination, reception, and ongoing pop-exegesis of a film is fluid. Digital technology has created the opportunity for viewers to tailor-make their experience of films, going even so far

as to create their own edits, sometimes altering the original, "canonical" narrative linearity entirely.

The thematic core that connects fairy tale film to the historical genres of folk tale and literary fairy tale can be conceptualized as comprised of five elements: a sense of wonder, sexuality and gender, the conflict of good and evil, the success of the meritorious individual, and finally, metamorphosis and transformation. Each element was analyzed in light of the primary film sources and secondary sources in the areas of folklore, literary fairy tales, fantasy genre, and film studies. Pan's Labyrinth was then examined for Guillermo Del Toro's approach to utilizing each key element.

An establishment of the sense of wonder is defined by magical occurrences, locations, events or creatures, realized onscreen through the use of special effects as well as characterization and setting. The characters in a fairy tale film react as citizens of this magical ontology with an unquestioning acceptance of the magical occurrences, locations, events or creatures. Accordingly, many protagonists in fairy tale films are children, since their requisite child-sight allows them to accept the magic onscreen without hesitation. The audience, identifying with such a protagonist, also accepts the magic without hesitation. The setting of a fairy tale film is concerned with a secondary world which is firmly rooted in the primary world, sometimes resulting in crosshatch tales where characters travel between worlds. The setting is recognizable to the audience, but dissimilar enough from real life to create a sense of wonder.

Gender and sexuality in fairy tale films is concerned neither with explicit onscreen sex acts or nudity as in pornography or erotica, nor with the trite chastity of the "fairy tale romance." While porn seeks only to titillate, it does not add anything productive to the fairy tale discourse. Erotica, while potentially meaningful in the context of the fairy tale discourse, is not necessary for communicating fairy tale conceptualizations of gender and sexuality. Fairy tale romance, despite its popular cultural conflation with the fairy tale film, is different from the latter. Both explicit sex acts and chaste romance are too concerned with the object of one's sexual desire to be of value as a commentary on the formation of the sexual and gendered identity, which is ultimately the concern of the fairy tale film. In order to realize the complexities of the identity formation process onscreen, fairy tale film employs a number of metonymical devices, creating unique visual shorthand to communicate gender and sexuality without needing to resort to explicit sex acts or trite romantic tropes. Examination of the formative and transformative power of awakening sexuality is what demarcates fairy tale film from other cinematic genres employing elements of fairy tale.

The chapters on the politics of good and evil and the ethics of success formed a thematic pair inextricably linked by the concepts of the hero and villain. It was established that however elusive clear moral demarcations are in the real world, they are essential to the fairy tale film narrative. The villains are utterly evil, and unless in someway redeemable, are doomed to destruction by a means which leaves no ambiguity as to their demise. Heroes are individuals with merits other than physical

prowess, who overcome a series of obstacles to eventually succeed in their quest or journey. These heroes are challenged by their own deficiencies and by a series of increasingly difficult detours, which aid in the process of the hero's metamorphosis.

The chapter on metamorphosis and transformation explored the nature of the dramatic, external changes which are realized onscreen in fairy tale films through the devices of special effects and editing. These dramatic metamorphoses are sometimes the means by which evil is overcome, through its change from evil to good or darkness to light. The idea of the ultimate metamorphosis of the protagonist is linked to the J.R.R. Tolkien's concept of Eucatastrophe, where the happily-ever-after ending of the fairy tale film is predicated by a struggle which results in a moment of pain and sorrow. Metamorphosis is crucial to the process of completion of the hero's or heroine's formative evolution.

It was demonstrated that Pan's Labyrinth harmonizes the five elements in a way in which to make reference to one is to be speaking of another. A sense of wonder is communicated through the setting of a mill in the woods, somewhere in Spain in 1944, a once-upon-a-time setting which lacks precise geographic location. This sense of wonder is further conveyed through the protagonist Ofelia's unquestioning acceptance of the magical quest she is sent upon by the mysterious Faun. Gender and sexuality are communicated through the dynamics of familial relationships, both literally and figuratively. The magical creatures which Ofelia faces in her series of tasks are magical metonyms for the wicked stepfather Captain Vidal. Given the creatures' unrestrained appetites and Vidal's own propensity for

consumption, the act of devouring becomes a metaphorical replacement for sexual activity. The politics of good and evil and the ethics of success are expressed in the polarities of the unquestioningly obedient Fascist Captain Vidal, and the feminine curiosity and disobedience of Ofelia. Vidal and his fairy tale avatars, the monstrous toad and the Pale Man, are creatures of utter evil, which have no remorse for their gluttonous violence that consumes everything around them. Vidal's failures in Pan's Labyrinth successively bring him lower and lower, until he is finally destroyed at the end of the film, his name never to be spoken of again. By contrast, Ofelia, by the merit of disobedience, succeeds in her progressively difficult tasks until she comes to the point of Eucatastrophe through self-sacrifice. Her resulting metamorphosis is realized in a stunning change of setting and color palette, a clearly happily-ever-after ending for the triumphant heroine.

Having summarized the main points of this study, let us return to the question posed at the outset of the study, which is, do we really recognize a fairy tale film when we see it?

Imagine a darkened theater as the credits have just begun to roll. The theater begins to empty. The audience rises and begins to exit, conversation turning immediately to the film viewed. One person asks the question, "Was it just me, or was that film a fairy tale?"

A friend produces a derisive snort. "It took place in New York; there were no princesses or dragons, or anything of the kind."

"There was that street musician named 'Wizard'."

"It's just a name. It *wasn't* a fairy tale. It happened in modern times."

"Well, so did Enchanted."

"That's different; there was a princess in that one. And that was a Disney film."

Tomorrow they will read Pam Grady's review of the film in the San Francisco Chronicle stating that "the entire story is ridiculous…[c]oincidences pile on, behavior and motivations defy logic" (sfgate.com). The majority of reviews will complain about the film's ridiculous coincidences and contrived plot devices, while a few, particularly Linda Cook will recognize that "[a]s a real-life story, this would be preposterous. But as a fantasy ode to the spiritual qualities of music in our lives, it works beautifully" (rottentomatoes.com). Filmcritic.com reviewer Anne Gilbert ends up striking the nail on the head: "Going in to August Rush, you've got to be more than willing to accept fairy tale magic; you've got to be looking to embrace it, with all of its whimsy and overzealous sense of wonder. That way, the movie can be sweet (if a bit ponderously so) as opposed to so precious you feel the need to punt it through a window" (filmcritic.com). The wonder of fairy tale films requires our complete acceptance of the magic; our suspension of disbelief must be entire. And when the cues which signal a fairy tale film are missed, then the experience is a difficult one. The realm of Faerie is a disorienting landscape when one mistakes it for "the real world."

Apparently we don't know a fairy tale film when we see one. Is August Rush a fairy tale film? According to the parameters set out in the five elements; yes. Its plot

contrivances with music as metonym for magic seek to evoke wonder. The tale of an abandoned child named Evan seeking his parents relates to gender and sexuality. Evan's quest for his parents involves the villainous Wizard who nearly thwarts young Evan, but since the meritorious individual must win in the end, Evan escapes and through the magic of music is reunited with his mother, transforming him from orphan to son. The question remains whether it does so well, which is largely a subjectively aesthetic question, although the five elements would be helpful tools in such a process.

Returning to a dubious candidate for fairy tale film from the introduction, the same process might be repeated. Is the X-Men film a fairy tale? The special effects are not seeking to evoke wonder, but rather merely carry the plot along. It addresses the question of identity and becoming human, but on the whole it is related to questions of species rather than sexuality and gender. There is a definite struggle between good and evil, and the meritorious individual wins out in the end, but aside from one character's hair color changing, there isn't much in the way of hyperbolic metamorphosis (outside one villain's ability to act as a changeling). No, X-Men is not a fairy tale; it is a comic book film, related more to Greek mythology than fairy tale and folklore.

What about more iconic fairy tale films, such as The Princess Bride? There is no question that the film evokes a sense of wonder, despite a near complete absence of magic, through location and character. The lands are familiar medieval settings, but one will not find the kingdom of Florin in any history book or on any map. There

is a swordsman, a giant, a pirate, a princess, a wicked king, all rather ambiguous character designations; we never really learn enough about their motivations and life to consider them beyond the parameters of the film narrative. The film deals with gender and sexuality, but only in a "fairy tale romance" sort of way. It does not ask any difficult questions about identity. There is a struggle between good and evil, between the lovers Buttercup and Westley and their friends, and the evil Prince Humperdinck and his court. The meritorious individual(s) win out in the end, but at the end there is no real metamorphosis. Butttercup and Westley were in love at the outset of the film, and remain so at the end. It could be argued that Westley has transformed from stable-boy into the dread pirate Roberts, but this is more a plot device than character development. It seems likely that while Princess Bride contains many iconic fairy tale *elements*, it is more a romantic comedy than fairy tale film.

The process could be repeated, over and over again, looking at film after film. We might find ourselves surprised at which films present themselves as fairy tales within this matrix, such as The Nativity Story, opening an interesting possibility for study on the folklore of Christmas, and how the fairy tale may be the modern repository of religious narrative. We might also be surprised as which ones do not make the cut, such as Ever After, which although it is unarguably a retelling of a popular fairy tale, has enough of Faerie leached out of it that it no longer belongs to the genre, but rather to a form a pseudo-historical fiction.

Encompassing all the suggested criteria for the fairy tale film we have explored thus far, Goodenough states that "[t]raditionally fairy-tale characters are

destined to be orphaned, exposed, and abandoned so they can go on perilous quests, be empowered by magic, and eventually transform into sparkling adults" (345). Nevertheless, it does a disservice to the tradition of the fairy tale to include any film which deals with gender and sexuality, good struggling against evil, or any of the five elements alone. Rather, these five elements must be measured against the tradition they inhabit, and then evaluated, not as means to an end, but rather parts of a whole.

To put it another way, for a film to be categorized within the fairy tale genre, it must not only possess a number of these five elements, but those five elements should be woven together in such a fashion that to speak about one is to make reference to another. When a film utilizes all five of these elements, it can be recognized for what it is: a fairy tale whether the characters be elves and faeries inhabiting a dark wood or princes masquerading as rich businessmen, while little ash girls hide inside street walkers in downtown L.A. In this way, employing Pan's Labyrinth as an exemplary case study is not reverse engineering; while Pan's Labyrinth certainly exemplifies each of the five elements in a superior fashion, the five elements do not emerge from study of that film alone. It is only within the larger contexts of other fairy tale films such as Valerie and Her Week of Wonders, Stardust, The City of Lost Children and so on. Even films such as Princess Bride, which do not contain all five elements, have provided a negative contrast by which to determine the efficacy of these five elements.

This may seem too clinical for some; in seeking to define wonder, some might argue that wonder becomes lost. However, as at the end of the fairy tale, we hope for

a souvenir, a concrete object to ensure that we have traveled the Perilous Realm. Like the young boy in The Polar Express who wakes to find a bell from Santa's sleigh under his Christmas Tree, or Dorothy waking in The Wizard of Oz to familiar faces she recognizes from her journey, we want to know that our experience has been more than just a dream. So long as the enterprise of folklore and fairy tales seeks to include cinematic representations of fairy tale in its discourse, something more than simple aesthetic appreciation (as is the case in Zipes' opinions on Disney), motif-bound association (which rightly discovers Cinderella in Pretty Woman), or direct adaptation needs to enter the process. Simply put, the five elements act to delimit "the objects of our inquiry" (Braun, 2000: 11), while simultaneously constructing a theoretical shorthand for discussion of the genre of fairy tale film.

To call this a conclusion is somewhat remiss. It implies an arrival, a consummation, a completion to the project. Open-endedness and invitation to a dialogue are implicit in the very title of this project. My conclusion is simply to invite others to take these five keys and attempt to open doors and passageways leading into the labyrinth of Faerie. The keys are only as good as they are useful in opening such doors, and it is hoped that this study will serve both to contribute to the existing academic discussion of the genre and to provoke a future dialogue.

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